

**AN ANTHROPOLOGY OF ANGER**  
**A POSSIBLE DIALOGUE**  
**BETWEEN SIGMUND FREUD AND THE BIBLE**

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**by**  
**Dwight M. Sullivan**

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*This dissertation, written by*

**Dwight Matthew Sullivan**

*under the direction of—his—Faculty Committee,  
and approved by its members, has been presented  
to and accepted by the Faculty of the School of  
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requirements for the degree of*

**DOCTOR OF RELIGION**

*Faculty Committee*

Howard Chubbell

Reysnerius

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Date May 31, 1974.

Jay C. Hough, Jr.

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## INTRODUCTION

The English say things so aptly. One of their proverbs reads:

"He is a fool who cannot be angry;  
but he is a wise man who will not."<sup>1</sup>

Human anger has often received an unfavorable rating. Throughout history, the emotion has been the subject of ill reports. As far back as 2300 years, Philemon is purported to have said, "We are all crazy when we are angry."<sup>2</sup> The unfavorable comments appear throughout the centuries until our own:

"Anger is a brief lunacy." -- Horace, 5 B.C.

"Anger is like the ruins which smash themselves on what they fall."  
Seneca, 43 A.D.

"How much more grievous are the consequences of anger than the causes of it." -- Marcus Aurelius, 170 A.D.

"The angry man never wanted woe." -- Thomas Draxe, 1633 A.D.

"Whatev'er's begun in anger ends in shame." -- Benjamin Franklin,  
1734 A.D.

"Anger is never without a reason, but seldom a good one." -- Benjamin Franklin, 1753.

"Anger is a vulgar passion directed to vulgar ends and it always sinks to the level of its object." -- Ernest von Feuchtersleben, 1938.<sup>3</sup>

Present societal attitudes towards anger seem no less disparaging. To be angry is to be rude, coarse or "out of place," both in childhood and in adult circles. Anger is often associated with emotional or deranged persons, alcoholics, or with members of the lower econo-

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<sup>1</sup>"Thoughts ... on the Business of Life," Forbes, CXII, 3 (August 1, 1973), 60.

<sup>2</sup>H.L. Mencken, (ed.), A New Dictionary of Quotations on Historical Principles from Ancient and Modern Sources (New York: Knopf, 1957) pp. 43-44.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

mic class. It is not something a person indulges in, as it may be considered unprofessional, a sign of weakness or of "blowing it."

The Church classically has logged no better record. In some churches to become angry is considered unChristian, sinful and even unloving. One example of this view was presented recently by Clarence E. Macartney, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, who wrote:

"Anger is one of the most common sins, yet one of the most dangerous and injurious to the peace and well-being of man. More than any other sin, it blasts the flower of friendship, turns men out of Eden, destroys peace and concord in the home, incites to crime and violence, and turns love and affection into hatred."<sup>4</sup>

The author goes on to state, however, that anger is justified when it is constituted by (1)proper motivation (namely, unselfish considerations) (2)the nature of the wrong (namely, not to oneself but to another) and (3)proper focus and direction (against the wrong deeds, situations, institutions.<sup>5</sup> This perspective, of course, represents only some churches as others would not agree but would be more tolerant in their views.

One psychoanalyst has recently pointed out the ills of repressed anger. Leo Madow in his book, Anger, draws connections between repressed anger and psychosomatic conditions. Ulcers are a prime example. The tension in the person upsets the timing and acidity in the stomach, so that the person literally eats himself/herself up. Madow sees other gastrointestinal disorders, such as some cases of nausea, vomiting, ul-

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<sup>4</sup>Norman V. Hope, "How To Be Good -- And Mad," Christianity Today, XII: 21 (July 19, 1968), 3.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 4.

cerative colitis as being influenced by angry feelings.<sup>6</sup> Among the other physical conditions Madow lists as being influenced by repressed anger are asthma attacks, pruritus (itching of the skin), inability to have or maintain an erection, backaches, stammering or stuttering, the touching off of an epileptic seizure, high blood pressure, precipitation of anginal attacks, apoplexy and even the onset of colds (through a lowering of body resistance through stress). Self-destructive behavior is linked similarly with repressed anger. Some examples are depression, suicidal wishes, drug addiction (including alcoholism) and accidents. Madow's theory is that behind every accident there is some impulse or repressed desire of anger.<sup>7</sup>

With such a poor rating and with such a supposedly high potential for destruction, a look into anger is in order. As an emotion, it certainly seems prevalent enough to warrant an investigation because it influences and appears in church settings. Is anger truly destructive and to be feared, as this cursory and preliminary sketching would seem to indicate? Or is it a certain type of anger, such as repressed anger, which is harmful? How is this human phenomenon to be viewed and understood?

The purpose of this study will be to obtain an understanding of human anger, that is, to formulate an anthropology of anger. This will be attempted by scrutinizing two major sources: the Old and New Testa-

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<sup>6</sup>Leo Madow, Anger (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1972), p. 74.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., pp. 78-86.

ments and the works of Sigmund Freud. The Biblical materials will be the Kittel edition of the Hebrew text of the Old Testament and the Nestle-Aland edition of the New Testament. The sources for Freud will be his major works, written throughout his life. The use for the Biblical literature is motivated by the present importance of these texts for churches in particular and for Western Civilization in general. The use of Sigmund Freud is prompted by the continuing importance of this thinker for present day psychological understandings of humans. The two sources, one ancient and the other modern, may shed light upon an anthropology of anger, i.e., an understanding of human anger.

The approach employed in this study will be one of careful investigation of each major source for the particular anthropology of anger of each. Much will be inferred from texts which mention or employ anger in the context. A dialogue will then be attempted between the two sources. The approach of this study will be inductive.

Because the terms used in the two sources are different, this study will attempt to enter each's world and follow each's terminology. The terms that will be explored in the Old and New Testaments are explicit words for "anger," which will be defined for purposes of this study as "a strong passion or emotion of displeasure, and usually antagonism, excited by a sense of injury or insult."<sup>8</sup> While Freud does not use the word anger, he does employ the term, aggression, which will be defined as "impulses, conscious or unconscious, of a destructive nature."

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<sup>8</sup>Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, (Springfield: Merriam, 1957), p. 34.

## CHAPTER I

## AGGRESSION IN SIGMUND FREUD'S WORKS

Sigmund Freud had a good deal to say about aggression. In his later years, he came to place it as one of the most important factors shaping human existence. This might come as a surprise to some persons holding popular notions about Freud. If the average person in the street were to be asked what they remember about Freud, the answer most likely to be received would be "sex." Such an association is true of the early Freud; however, it does not do justice to the later Freud. Aggression in Freud's later works plays an integral role in the human personality.

Sigmund Freud will undoubtedly be remembered as one of the Twentieth Century's most seminal thinkers. His works contain the freshness of insight, profundity and contemporaneity of concept that marks a great man. Not only did he found the psychoanalytic movement, but he stimulated many other notable thinkers, such as Jung, Adler, Fromm, and Horney. Others such as Erickson, Boss, Binswager, Marcuse, Brown have been stimulated to adopt and expand Freud's concepts into each's various fields and perspectives.

Presently Freud may be considered to share company with Copernicus, Darwin and Marx, whose originality in thinking was system-shattering. After Freud human understanding of themselves is not the same. He was the first person to formulate a systematic and scientific understanding of human unconscious depths. His discoveries concerning the active resistance of the unconscious, his findings concerning infantile



sexuality were so startling that he incurred the outrage and abuse from many of his contemporaries. His research into the interpretation of dreams remains a landmark in trenchant insight. Such a profound and influential thinker is important to understand for the present day religious person. Freud must be reckoned with.

Freud will be explored in this study according to chronological lines. A scientist who understood himself as formulating concepts to fit with his understanding at a particular time, he realized his efforts to be open-ended and tentative. New data called for new formulations. Freud's procedure was one of accumulation of data from observation and then refining his theories to explain more adequately the perceived phenomenon. His theories thus have a pattern of development through time. New theories come to be built from older ones which he establishes from accumulated observations. The historical development of his ideas is thus important for the understanding of his final thinking (by final is meant his concepts at the time of his death.) Such a chronological approach provides the context and internal logic for understanding how he derives his later formulations.

Freud had two different views of the role of aggression. His earliest view is that aggression is related to the ego. Later, it is seen as a distinct instinct in opposition with the preservative instincts.

#### AGGRESSION IN THE PRESERVATIVE INSTINCT

Freud's first occasion to discuss aggression was in his important work, "Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality," written in 1905

and being an important treatise following his momentous Interpretation of Dreams in 1899. The occasion of discussion arises within the context of the sexual perversions of sadism and masochism found in the First of the Three Essays, entitled, "The Sexual Aberrations."

He begins his work by asserting the existence of a sexual instinct analogous to the hunger instinct. He terms this instinct "libido." He directs his discussion to the popular notion of non-sexuality during childhood with its development and appearance coming at puberty. Freud does not agree with this notion.

Freud defines in this work terms which may be helpful to later discussions. A sexual object is "the person from whom sexual attraction proceeds," and a sexual aim is "the act towards which the instinct tends."<sup>1</sup> Deviations occur in both sexual object and aim, resulting in "inversion," (homosexuality) and in perversion, respectively. Sadism and masochism are placed under the latter category.

Perversions are defined as sexual activities which either (a) extend, in an anatomical sense, beyond the regions of the body that are designed for sexual union," or (b) "linger over the intermediate relations to the sexual object which should normally be traversed rapidly on the path towards the sexual aim."<sup>2</sup> A perversion then is the use of a non-sexual organ for sexual purposes or the fixation of a step in the normal progression of the sexual activity. After discussing fetism,

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<sup>1</sup>Sigmund Freud, "Three Essays on Sexuality," in his Standard Edition of Complete Psychological Works (London: Hogarth Press, 1968), VII, 135-136.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., VII, 150.

voyeurism and exhibitionism, he turns his attention to sadism and masochism. "The most common and the most significant of all the perversions," he writes, "--the desire to inflict pain upon the sexual object, and its reverse-- received from Krafft-Ebing the names of 'sadism' and 'masochism' for its active and passive forms respectively."<sup>3</sup> Another term he refers to is 'algolagnia,' which stresses the pleasure obtained in the infliction of pain to the sexual object. The phenomenon of sadism is thus linked with aggression:

As regards active algolagnia, sadism, the roots are easy to detect in the normal. The sexuality of most male human beings contains an element of aggressiveness-- a desire to subjugate; the biological significance of it seems to lie in the need for overcoming the resistance of the sexual object by means other than the process of wooing. Thus sadism would correspond to an aggressive component of the sexual instinct which has become independent and exaggerated and, by displacement, has usurped the leading position.<sup>4</sup>

In this remarkable passage, Freud connects sadism with aggression. Aggression is viewed as a component of the sexual instinct, at least in this function. The aggression here is one of seeking domination, rather than a destructive lashing out against some object. Its function of seeking domination is the procurement of a sexual object for sexual purposes. As such, the aggression is seen as something normal and necessary for the process of species perservation. It is an alternative to an attempt towards persuasion and attraction of a sexual object. Aggressiveness involves a certain direct activity involving some use of force for the purpose of subjugation.

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid., VII, 157.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., VII, 157-158.

A fixation then occurs in the process of the sexual activity, as the sadist is a person with a condition of this aggressive component that has become exaggerated and separated from the normal part it plays in the sexual activity. It takes then the form of inflicting pain upon another for the purpose of personal pleasure.

At this time Freud is interested in investigating these sexual perversions and not aggression for itself. He does not say whether aggression is solely connected with the sexual instinct. He does not try to formulate a theory on aggression. He does say at a later point that sadism and masochism involve more than aggression, which though a component, is not the sole cause.<sup>5</sup> Yet it is significant that at this early stage, aggression is associated with sadism, with an understanding of domination, and with the inflicting of pain (basically a destructive act.)

Finally, Freud ties in aggression and sadism on a social level.

The history of human civilization shows beyond any doubt that there is an intimate connection between cruelty and the sexual instinct; but nothing has been done towards explaining the connection, apart from laying emphasis on the aggressive factor in the libido.<sup>6</sup>

While Freud recognizes the possibility of aggression and cruelty on a social level, he leaves the matter as an open-ended question. At this point he has no theory accounting for aggression on the social scale.

However, towards the end of the First Essay, Freud does make a statement on the transformation of emotions, as he links neurosis with

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., VII, 160.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., VII, 159.

perversions (neuroses, he says, are the negative of perversions). "It is also through the medium of this connection between libido and cruelty that the transformation of love into hate takes place, the transformation of affectionate into hostile impulses, which is characteristic of a great number of cases of neurosis, and indeed, it would seem, of paranoia in general."<sup>7</sup> Hostility or aggression is thus seen in the neurotic manifestation as being a result of sexual perversion in the person. This connection of a transformation from love into hate with sexuality takes on a universal understanding when Freud declares that the disposition towards perversity is to be found in "normality."<sup>8</sup>

The inclination towards cruelty is seen by Freud as a part of infantile sexuality. In his Second Essay ("Infantile Sexuality"), he states:

The cruel component of the sexual instinct develops in childhood even more independently of the sexual activities that are attached to erotogenic zones. Cruelty in general comes easily to the childish nature, since the obstacle that brings the instinct for mastery to a halt at another person's pain-- namely a capacity for pity-- is developed relatively late. The fundamental psychological analysis of this instinct has, as we know, not yet been satisfactorily achieved. It may be assumed that the impulse of cruelty arises from the instinct for mastery and appears at a period of sexual life at which the genitals have not yet taken over their later role. It then dominates a phase of sexual life which we shall later describe as a pregenital organization.<sup>9</sup>

Cruelty once again is linked with a need for mastery. Its appearance is part of infantile sexuality, but does not become linked with genital sexuality until puberty. Cruelty is thus not to be understood as sadism

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid., VII, 171.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., VII, 192-193.

until the genital stage. The two are independent until that time. The need for cruelty is seen, however, to be a part of the personality from a very early time.

The discussion on sadism-masochism and on love-hate is continued in the 1915 paper, "Instincts and Their Vicissitudes." Investigating the concept of instincts, Freud suggest that there exist only two primal instincts: the ego (or self-preservative) and the sexual. These instincts operate according to the pleasure and reality principles. The pleasure principle states that a person attempts to reduce the amount of excitation felt, while the reality principle states that the person must do this in accordance with the external situation. Freud's basis for the two instincts and their operation comes from earlier research with cases of "transference neurosis" (hysteria and obsessional neurosis) in which there seems to be a conflict between the sexual instincts and requirements of the ego, the part of the mental processes responsible for mediating between the internal and external. Its task thus is the survival of the person against outside threat.

Looking only at the sexual instincts, Freud lists four vicissitudes which occur during development and are thus of interest to a psychoanalytic view: reversal into its opposite, turning round upon the subject's own self, repression, and sublimation.<sup>10</sup> The phenomena of sadism-masochism and of love turning into hate are classified under the vicissitude of a "reversal into its opposite," the former representing a

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<sup>10</sup>Sigmund Freud, "Instincts and Their Vicissitudes," Ibid., XIV, 126.

change from active to passive and the latter being a reversal of content. It is here that Freud adds a few more statements in the continuing discussion of sadism, which has been seen as being linked by him with aggression.

His description of sadism is stronger than in previous statements. Here he states: "Sadism consists in the exercise of violence or power upon some person as object,"<sup>11</sup> which is followed a few paragraphs later by his saying that sadism "seems to strive towards the accomplishment of a quite special aim-- not only to humiliate and master, but, in addition, to inflict pains."<sup>12</sup> But, he says, the inflicting of pain is not at first connected with sadism. This connection occurs through masochism which is related to sexual feelings. The vicissitude is one of reversal from sadism (mastery, humiliating others) into masochism in which pain heightens the sexual feelings. Once again Freud separates what he defines as sadism from the infliction of pain; the two are originally independent of one another. Sadism is still seen to arise from the sexual instinct, but only becomes associated with sexual excitations through the vicissitude of reversal into the opposite.

Hitherto, Freud had mentioned aggression only in the context of sadism. But in this essay on the instincts, he gives it a different and wider understanding in the framework of love-hate. The phenomenon of love transforming into hate is a case of the vicissitude of reversal into its opposite. The relationship of love and hate is not just the

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid., XIV, 127.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., XIV, 128.

commonly imagined polarity of love-hate, but involves also the antitheses of loving-being loved, and (loving-hating)-indifference.<sup>13</sup> The way that aggression fits into this schema unfolds with his conceptualization of the psychic development, involving the ego and libido, and the three polarities of mental life.

The three polarities relating to the mental life of active-passive (biological), ego-external world (real), and pleasure-unpleasure (economic) influence the manner of instinctual vicissitude. Love and hate can be understood in the light of these polarities which involve the libido and ego. Libido is the energy of the sexual instinct and the ego is the portion of the person's mental processes which relates the internal instincts to the external realities. Love and hate are involved in the person's development which proceeds, according to Freud in this work by the person's originally being in a state of primary narcissism. The ego is cathected with libido, meaning that it is an object which the energy of the libido is directed. As is usual in Freud's thinking, the libido cathects outside or external objects. This concept is a new one for him and hence receives the title of narcissism and auto-eroticism. The time which Freud is describing is early childhood immediately after birth. As the ego and not the external world is cathected with libido, outside objects are of little interest to the person. If love were to be defined as the relationship of the ego to its sources of pleasure, then at this point in the person's early development, the person loves only himself/herself and is indifferent to the

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid., XIV, 133.



world. The child loves itself and its state is a product of the interaction of the ego-external world and pleasure-unpleasure polarities.

However, this state of primary narcissism cannot be long maintained. For survival, the ego must relate to the external world. Outside objects acquire status as to pleasure or unpleasure for the child. Those things the person likes, he/she incorporates greedily, while those things causing displeasure, the ego expels. The mechanism for this is an original "reality-ego" which pays attention to external reality, which then becomes a "pleasure-ego" consisting of all those things which bring pleasure to the person.<sup>14</sup> As love enters with the objects of pleasure, so does hate enter into the world with the unpleasurable objects. Hating, then, is just the opposite of Freud's definition of loving, in that hating is the relationship of the ego to objects of unpleasure. Indifference is also to be understood in this view of hating: "Indifference falls into place as a special case of hate or dislike, after having first appeared as their forerunner."<sup>15</sup>

At this time objects of the world are dealt with in either of two ways: the objects either give pleasure or displeasure. Those things giving pleasure are considered part of the "pleasure-ego" while those items giving displeasure are seen as part of the external world by the child. Thus those things which are unpleasurable are seen as being hostile. The object of displeasure is thus considered alien and is repulsed. This leads to the appearance of aggression:

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<sup>14</sup>Ibid., XIV, 136.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

Converseley, if the object is a source of unpleasurable feelings, there is an urge which endeavours to increase the distance between the object and the ego and to repeat in relation to the object the original attempt at flight from the external world with its emission of stimuli. We feel the 'repulsion' of the object, and hate it; this hate can afterwards be intensified to the point of an aggressive inclination against the object-- an intention to destroy it.<sup>16</sup>

Aggression, then is seen in connection with this hating which arises in the early development of the child. It is an intensified feeling of repulsion against an object of displeasure. It is rooted in the primal desire to flee from such objects but takes instead the form of destruction. Aggression is thus seen here in a significantly different light than in the Three Essays of Sexuality. Aggression is described in terms of seeking to destroy an object rather than to acquire and dominate it. It is seen as serving in both works as functioning in service of an instinct. However in this work, the instinct for which it functions seems to be different:

It is noteworthy that in the use of the word 'hate' no such intimate connection with sexual pleasure and the sexual function appears. The relation of unpleasure seems to be the sole decisive one. The ego hates, abhors and pursues with intent to destroy all objects which are a source of unpleasurable feeling for it, without taking into account whether they mean a frustration of sexual satisfaction or of the satisfaction of self-preservative needs. Indeed, it may be asserted that the true prototypes of the relation of hate are derived not from sexual life, but from the ego's struggle to preserve and maintain itself.<sup>17</sup>

The aggressive tendencies of the person are linked to the ego instincts for self-preservation. There is an active quality in this aggression, whose key for understanding is found in sources of displeas-

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<sup>16</sup>Ibid., XIV, 137.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., XIV, 138.

ure. The aggression is thus seen to be of a reactive nature. Against those things which cause displeasure through frustration of the instincts is directed the person's aggression. The function of the aggression is a natural and biological one. It is involved in the survival of the person by seeking to destroy all objects causing harm or displeasure to it.

The understanding of aggression being related to this primal 'hating' which is part of the ego instincts casts light upon the discussion of other areas. As hating is associated with the ego instincts and as loving is connected with the sexual (libido) instinct, an antithesis is seen to develop between the instincts like that of hate and love. This occurs in the personality development and such an antithesis appears only in the genital stage. During the oral stage of personality development, love is a type of incorporation and devouring, while in the next stage, the pregenital sadistic-anal one, love appears as a striving for mastery and control of the object of desire. Only with the genital stage when the object of pleasure becomes connected with sexual excitation does love become seen as the opposite of hate. In fact, hating may become a part of the sexual instinctual aim, such as during the sadistic anal stage when the ego instincts may dominate the sexual ones.<sup>18</sup>

The developmental interaction of loving and hating for a person illuminate the phenomenon of love transforming into hate. Freud says that the hate that appears has its source in two areas. The first is related to previous stages of loving during the development which have

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<sup>18</sup>Ibid., XIV, 138-139.

not been resolved. The second source is the conflict between the sexual and ego instincts in the present situation of a person loving another. What appears then to be a transformation of love into hate is really a cessation of love and the glaring appearance of the already existing feelings of hating. Thus there is really no transformation of one feeling into another. Rather, the two exist together from a very early time and are related to opposite and often conflicting instincts.<sup>19</sup>

At this point, conclusions can be formed concerning Freud's early conceptions about aggression.

1. Aggression was first associated with the sadistic perversion. Aggression was seen to be part of the biological function of dominating a sexual object for sexual aims, which did not involve necessarily a destructive component. However, it is significant that aggression is connected with the sexual perversion of sadism from a very early time, sadism being the inflicting of pain upon another for the purpose of personal pleasure.
2. Aggression later is seen to be the seeking to destroy. Its roots are found early in a person's development and are related to the instinct for survival.
3. Aggression seems reactive to specific objects and seems to function for the goals of instincts. At this time there is no hypothesis of an aggression instinct.
4. The appearance of hate in the human, particularly in situations of a transformation from love to hate, is related to previous and unre-

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<sup>19</sup>Ibid., XIV, 139.

solved stages of development involving loving, and is related to the present conflicts between the ego and the sexual instincts.

From these statements, the following conclusions may be drawn about Freud's anthropology of aggression in this stage of his life:

1. Aggression is a very basic part of the human personality and is related to survival itself. Though it arises from the self-preservative instinct, it is developed through early interaction of the child with its environment. As such, aggression would represent a learned response for the human. As Freud is speaking of all people, aggression is seen as occurring on a universal level.
2. The actual expression of aggression is a reaction to a situation involving an intense amount of displeasure. The appearance of destructive tendencies has a reason and a source. Aggression is associated with displeasure and the interests of surviving. It therefore represents something natural and necessary. It is a vital function for a person's existence.
3. Present situations involving hate and aggression may be related to earlier unresolved stages of personality development. Some person's angry and aggressive feelings may not thus be understandable from a present situation. Only a comprehension of the person's development may make the person's anger more understandable.

#### AGGRESSION IN THE DEATH INSTINCT

Already a duality was seen in connection with aggression. In his work, "Instincts and Their Vicissitudes," aggression is seen to be part of the ego instincts which are often in conflict with the sexual

instincts. Yet aggression is seen to be acting in the service of the preservation of the person. Later in his life, Freud saw aggression differently. Instead of an action serving either the ego or sexual instincts, it was hypothesized to be part of an instinct in its own right. The dualism was maintained, only between an aggression instinct and a life instinct. This aggression instinct is most properly termed the death instinct. It comes to play a very large part in his total conceptions concerning people.

To examine this aspect of Freud's thinking, a derivation of his formulations of the death instinct will be made. By this means will be found the basis and argument for this development in thought which affects all previous thinking. Attempts for derivation will center largely upon his work, Beyond the Pleasure Principle. A look will then be made at some of the consequences and developments involving this death instinct for the individual and for the society of which he is a part. This will involve examining his works, Ego and Id and Civilization and Its Discontents.

#### Derivation of the Death Instinct

Many have speculated as to what led Freud to conceptualizing a death instinct. The thinking has run from forms of second-guessing to rather sophisticated attempts at psychoanalyzing Freud. While some have speculated that his thinking was a disillusioned reaction to the First World War, others have asserted that it has to do with Freud's own personality. In his biography on Freud, Ernest Jones relates incidents

which are used to indicate a fear of death by Freud.<sup>20</sup> Other writers have apparently lifted up explanations of the death of his daughter, the discovery of his cancer, or the loss of his grandson, but none of these are plausible for they occurred after the writing of his book, Beyond the Pleasure Principle.<sup>21</sup>

Though such speculation may attempt to expose some of the motivation for Freud's looking in this direction, it does not explain how he decided upon his conclusions. The answer for the establishment of the death instinct is to be found in his works. The evolution of thinking towards a death instinct has an internal reason. It arises from certain contradictions and unexplained data. He found that his previous thinking did not account for certain phenomenon.

Before the publishing of his work, Beyond the Pleasure Principle, Freud had understood the human from the operation of the pleasure principle and its antithesis, the reality principle. The pleasure principle basically states that the person attempts to reduce displeasure (heightened stimulus) so that it may experience pleasure (diminished external stimulus) in accordance with the sexual instinct. Opposing the workings of the pleasure principle is the reality principle, which has the function of maintaining the survival of the person. It helps to keep the impulses of the libido in line with the observable facts of the external world; hence, it serves as a check against the sexual instinct impulses from running amok with the outside world. But the presence

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<sup>20</sup>Ernest Jones, The Life and Work of Sigmund Freud, (New York: Basic Books, 1960), III, 279.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., III, 279-280.

of a restraining force may exact a high toll. Pathology may result from the aims and contents of the sexual instincts which are repressed into the unconscious by the ego in service of the reality principle. However even in such states of pathology, the pleasure principle still seeks its satisfaction and can overthrow the repression effected by the reality principle. These two operations and their interaction could account for most studied psychological states. For a long time they represented in Freud's mind primal and complete principles.

Freud, however, came across one psychological phenomenon which in his mind could not be explained on the basis of his two principles. Puzzling him was the phenomenon of "traumatic neurosis." The dreams of the persons who developed this condition (the result often of severe physical concussion) could not be explained adequately by his previous theories. His previous conclusions based on the concept of the pleasure principle was that a dream represents a "wish-fulfillment." Anxiety dreams and even punishment dreams could be explained by this conceptualization, but not traumatic neurosis dreams. According to an understanding of "wish-fulfillment," a traumatic neurosis dream should be attempting to find a solution, a cure for the situation. Instead, the dream recurrently takes the person back to the situation causing the trauma. Freud could only conclude from this consideration that there must be something disturbing the function of wish-fulfillment.<sup>22</sup>

Repetition is a trait of the dreams of traumatic neurosis.

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<sup>22</sup>Sigmund Freud, "Beyond the Pleasure Principle" in his Standard Edition..., XVII, 12-14.



Freud looks elsewhere in his book for examples of repetition and finds situations of work expressed in children's playing and repetition in "transference neurosis" in which the person within the psychoanalytic relationship relives and repeats repressed material, such as conflicts occurring during the Oedipal conflict at age four or five. Freud tentatively infers a "compulsion to repeat" which raises questions relative to the pleasure principle. If the pleasure principle is primary, then why is there a compulsion to repeat items which are probably not pleasurable at all and not give satisfaction to the impulses of the sexual instincts? Though some of the evidence is tenuous, Freud launches his inquiry into an instinct more primal than the pleasure principle:

Enough is left unexplained to justify the hypothesis of a compulsion to repeat-- something that seems more primitive, more elementary, more instinctual than the pleasure principle which it over-rides.<sup>23</sup>

Seeking an explanation for the nature of traumatic neurosis dreams, Freud explores along physiological lines. While the system of consciousness has protection against intense external stimuli, it has no shields against intense internal excitations. What occurs in the traumatic situation is an external force so sudden or large that it catches the person off guard. Violent internal excitations are triggered and for an instant the pleasure principle is knocked out of action. To stem the flood of internal excitations during trauma, the organism mobilizes its cathetic energy to bind the excitations into quiescent or fixed cathexis. The organism's success in stemming the tide of internal stimulations will be proportional to the amount of cathetic binding energy

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<sup>23</sup>Ibid., XVII, 23.

it can mobilize, a process normally enhanced by anxiety and by parts of the receptive systems. The meaning of trauma, then, is that the organism has been caught with its last lines of defense down, so that the reason for the recurring dreams becomes clear. They are an attempt of the organism to build the anxiety that was missing during the traumatic event, an omission which allowed violence to the psychic system.

Freud's thought proceeds in this book according to technical and theoretical considerations which must be followed for appreciation of his results. The traumatic neurosis dreams represent for him an exception to his theory of dreams as wish-fulfillment. As a scientist, Freud must now find a new explanation to incorporate this exception in a way understandable to previous accepted findings. Freud again proceeds along physiological theoretical considerations, by noting that a traumatic situation corresponds to a failure of the psychical system to bind the organism's instinctual excitations. This seems important because when binding occurs, the person can then be under the dominance of the pleasure principle. Until this binding occurs, the pleasure principle cannot have full rule, and the priority of the organism will be to bind the energy.<sup>24</sup>

Thus, the compulsion to repeat is primary, even over the pleasure principle. But how is this compulsion related to instincts? Freud is moved to reconsider his definition of an instinct:

It seems, then, that an instinct is an urge inherent in organic life to restore an earlier state of things which the living entity has

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<sup>24</sup>Ibid., 34-35.

been obliged to abandon under the pressure of external disturbing forces; that is, it is a kind of organic elasticity, or, to put it another way, the expression of the inertia inherent in organic life.<sup>25</sup>

This formulation of instinct lays the groundwork for the thinking about a death instinct. It is a conservative definition, one which views the aim of the instinct to be that of restoration versus a propelling towards development. Taking note that the earliest state of life is the inorganic, and noting that all life dies for internal reasons, Freud concludes that "the aim of all life is death."<sup>26</sup>

The role of life, or self-preservation, becomes evident with this understanding. Life arose from tension in the environment and its first instinct was to restore itself to inanimate matter by dying. Again through external influences, the path of the life towards death is lengthened. The self-preservation instincts are to be understood as means to stave off premature external endings of the internally directed path towards death. According to Freud, the organism wants to die at its own time and choosing. The process of lengthening the process towards death is finally achieved by the germ cell which gives quasi-immortality to the stock of the life form.

The sexual instincts can be considered conservative, and certain cells, such as the germ-cells, seem to require libido for their activities, and added to the fact that the life of the organism is lengthened by cells banding together in a unit, this suggests that the

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<sup>25</sup>Ibid., 36.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., 38.

sexual instincts co-incide with the concept of Eros, the binding force holding life together.<sup>27</sup> Thus, the proper understanding of instincts seems to be a dualism between eros (which includes sexual and preservative instincts) and death instincts.<sup>28</sup> Not only is there a death instinct but there is a duality of life and death instincts going on within every living creature.

Freud reaches these conclusions on the basis of past psychoanalytic findings, physiology, biology and speculation. The reason for his speculations is to be found in the traumatic neurosis dreams which prove to be an exception to his earlier formulations. In attempting to find a broader conceptualization, Freud arrives at a death instinct opposes by a life instinct, suppositions which are supported in his arguing by biological findings and not contradicted by these findings. Freud's derivation is thus motivated by reasons pertaining to his scientific work and compelled forward by an interest for a better theory.

The phenomenon of sadism once again enters his considerations, only this time appertaining to the death instinct. Freud raises the question of how sadism, whose objective is to destroy, could arise from the Eros, which binds and preserves? He then asks a rhetorical question which anticipates future discussions:

Is it not plausible to suppose that this sadism is in fact a death instinct which, under the influence of the narcissistic libido, has been forced away from the ego and has consequently only emerged in relation to the object?<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup>Ibid., XVII, 50.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., XVII, 54.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., XVII, 53.

Freud's proposing the death instinct is quite speculative, something which he is quick to point out himself at the time of writing this work:

It may be asked whether and how far I am myself convinced of the truth of the hypotheses that have been set out in these pages. My answer would be that I am not convinced myself and that I do not seek to persuade other people to believe in them. Or, more precisely, that I do not know how far I believe in them.... I do not dispute the fact that the third step in the theory of the instincts, which I have taken here, cannot lay claim to the same degree of certainty as the two earlier ones-- the extension of the concept of sexuality and the hypothesis of narcissism.<sup>30</sup>

As a scientist, he is cautious with his suggesting a new theory and takes pains to point out in the discussion, the areas of doubt, insufficient knowledge and points needing research. His manner is self-evaluative and his direction is that of grappling for more data and better theories to explain that data.

This, then, is Freud's derivation of the death instinct. It is an instinct which will play an ever-increasing important role in his subsequent thought. And all of his previous thinking will come to be seen from the perspective of the death instinct.

The reaction to Freud's theory was not that of complete acceptance. Freud's biographer, Ernest Jones, states that at the time of his presenting the theory, the reception of it was mixed. While a few analysts came to accept it, most rejected it. Apparently later some biologists disclaimed any evidence to substantiate the existence of a death instinct.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup>Ibid., XVII, 59.

<sup>31</sup>Jones, III, 279-280.

To this day the idea of a death instinct gains little acceptance and gathers much resistance. Perhaps it is not too far from the mark to say that the resistance the concept receives is liken to that shown Freud's early formulations concerning human sexuality. Though Freud's thought is quite speculative, perhaps our age is not ready yet to face the place of death in human life.

Freud's theory is as bold as it is new. It suggests a provocative and profound understanding of all life. Though the aggressive element is barely mentioned in the 1920 work, Beyond the Pleasure Principle, it will figure more prominently in his understanding of the death instinct. This is the reason for the space given in this study to explore the derivation of this concept.

#### Aggression in the Individual

While Freud was tentative about his proposal of the death instinct in 1920, he is more sure of his hypothesis in the 1923 work, The Ego and The Id. In the introduction to his work, he says that the "thoughts contained in it are synthetic rather than speculative in character and their aim appears to be an ambitious one."<sup>32</sup> The death instinct comes to form an important part in his understanding of the ego.

The work, The Ego and The Id, deals primarily with his formulations on the three mental agencies (id, ego, super-ego) and their interaction and understanding. Entering the discussion is an expansion of

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<sup>32</sup>Sigmund Freud, The Ego and The Id (London: Hogarth Press, 1950), 7.

the idea of the death instinct and its relation to aggression, a discussion which enters again into the topics of sadism and the transformation from love to hate, phenomena he had studied before. As his discussions relating to aggression in the individual is heavily dependent upon his concepts of the ego, id, super-ego and the Oedipal conflict, these formulations will be explored briefly.

Through a number of processes and considerations, Freud arrived at the formulation of the mental processes being comprised by three entities: the id, ego and super-ego. The id is the reservoir of the libido, the energy of the sexual instinct. The ego is a surface entity on the id, and comes into being from the sensations of the body which ultimately arise from contact with the external world. The ego, then, is that part of the id modified by contact with the external world through perceptions. The function of the ego is to relate the id's instinctual tendencies with the external world. This is basically the reality principle.<sup>33</sup>

The ego represents what we call reason and sanity, in contrast to the id which contains the passions.<sup>34</sup>

The ego is also understood from the concept of identification and object-cathexis. An object of love becomes an object-cathexis of the libido of the id. When, however, this love object is lost, it is retained in the mental processes by the ego by a process called identification. This is how the ego is developed: "The character of the ego

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<sup>33</sup>Ibid., 28-31.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., 30.

is a precipitate of abandoned object-cathexes and that it contains a record of past object-choices."<sup>35</sup> This process is important for the relation of the ego to id. By it the ego gains greater accessibility to and control of the id, because now it becomes a love object of the id.<sup>36</sup>

This process of identifying lost love objects is vital for the forming of the third mental entity, the super-ego, which comes to play an important part in the understanding of aggression. The super-ego is formed during the Oedipal conflict. This conflict arises when the object-cathexis of the little boy becomes his mother, while the father is seen as an impediment. The conflict reaches resolution when the wishes to get rid of his father fail and the object-cathexis of the mother is given up and identification is made with the father. The identification made (which is complicated and actually involves a bi-sexual nature) form "precipitates" unlike any others before or after. These identifications form the super-ego (also called the ego-ideal).<sup>37</sup> The super-ego can also be seen as the reaction formation to these identifications because the Oedipal conflict is so charged and so threatening that it is repressed. The repression is effected by constructing in the psyche the same obstacle as the impeding father outside. What transpires externally is incorporated and constructed internally. The super-ego thus retains the father's attributes, leading to a set of prohibitions, "shoulds," and the formation of the conscience.<sup>38</sup>

The super-ego comes to be integrally related to the other two

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<sup>35</sup>Ibid., 36.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., 39-44.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., 35-39.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., 44-46.



mental entities. Being related to the Oedipal conflict, the super-ego comes into contact with the strong instinctual impulses of the id. This allows the super-ego contact with experiences of the past, with all the egos of past history, whose archaic record is stored in the id which is passed along genetically. The super-ego is very important. Just as the ego is the mediator of the external world, so is the super-ego the mediator of the internal world, the id. The super-ego may transform the id: "And thus it is that what belongs to the lowest depths in the minds of each one of us is changed, through this formation of the ideal, into what we value as the highest in the human soul."<sup>39</sup>

The three entities of the mental processes have much to do with the instincts, which Freud re-affirms as being comprised of two-- the life and death instincts. The Eros instinct is composed of the sexual and preservative instincts, which are readily apparent. However, a search for an example of the death instinct is more difficult and a search brings him back to discuss sadism. This is the best representative of the death instinct. The two instincts themselves, Freud thinks, seem related by being fused. An example of this fusion might explain the presence of aggression, he feels:

It appears that, as a result of the combination of unicellular organisms into multicellular forms of life, the death-instinct of the single cell can successfully be neutralized and the destructive impulses be diverted towards the external world through the instrumentality of a special organ. This special organ would seem to be the musculature; and the death-instinct would thus seem to express itself-- though probably only in part-- as an instinct of destruc-

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<sup>39</sup>Ibid., 48.

tion directed against the external world and other living organisms.<sup>40</sup>

One manifestation of the death instinct might be aggression against external objects. Freud's thinking is along general biological lines which puts his statements in a theoretical and universal understanding. Aggression here is directly associated with the death instinct, and thus is itself to be considered instinctual.

If the two instincts can be fused, then it is only logical to suppose that they can be de-fused. An example of de-fusion is to be found in the perversion of sadism, a condition of inflicting pain for pleasure (an example of fusion, Freud says, is sadism serving the sexual function.) The perversion represents a partial de-coupling of destructive from sexual instincts. While preserving his earlier observations on sadism, he describes a broader understanding which links sadism directly with destruction. Other examples of de-fusion are found in the epileptic fit and in many severe neuroses.

We perceive that for purposes of discharge the instinct of destruction is habitually enlisted in the service of Eros; we suspect that the epileptic fit is a product and sign of instinctual defusion; and we come to understand that defusion and the marked emergence of the death-instinct are among the most noteworthy effects of many severe neuroses, e.g., the obsessional neuroses.<sup>41</sup>

From considerations concerning aggression in paranoia and in the formation of homosexuality, Freud suggests the existence of a neutral energy capable of being displaced and used in service of either the sexual or destructive impulses. The displaceable energy implies that the

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<sup>40</sup>Ibid., 57.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid.

two instincts are not entirely separate, but that the aims of one may be satisfied by gratification of the other. Freud sees this neutral energy as proceeding from the narcissistic reservoir of the libido. Its interest is discharge; the path of discharge may be irrelevant to the organism. Resembling the displacement of objects in dreams, the energy may be displaced according to any of a number of paths. What this means is that the aggression may be directed indiscriminately. Freud refers to studies of Rank of cases of neurotic revenge being directed to objects having nothing to do with the cause of the desire for revenge. This might account for persons lashing out indiscriminately against the world. Aggression thus is seen as being capable of being directed indiscriminately; there may not always be a specific reason why a person becomes a target for another's aggression and anger, other than the person who attacks is a very angry person.<sup>42</sup>

Freud looks at internal aggression and explores the cases of melancholy and obsessional neurosis. The ego-ideal (super-ego), he concludes, has much to do with the severity of the neurotic disturbance in these cases, because the super-ego attacks the ego for material still repressed and held in the id. In melancholia, the ego-ideal rages against an object that has been made an identification by the ego. Thus the ego becomes the brunt of attack, and as the attack is internal, the person becomes melancholy or depressed.<sup>43</sup>

Not all cases of neurosis are like melancholia. In hysteria the

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<sup>42</sup>Ibid., 60-64.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., 73-75.

ego tries to protect itself from the super-ego by repressing material. Instead of repressing in service of the super-ego (as is the normal understanding), the ego represses to protect itself from the super-ego. The super-ego thus can take on the form of a tyrant in some cases, pouring profuse amounts of criticism and harshness. As the super-ego's actions of furious raging against the ego resembles sadism, Freud proposes the idea that in these cases, the death instinct has lodged itself in the super-ego.

What is now holding sway in the super-ego, as it were, is a pure culture of the death-instinct, and in fact it often enough succeeds in driving the ego into death, if the latter does not protect itself from the tyrant in time by a revulsion into mania.<sup>44</sup>

As in melancholia, the case of obsessional neurosis involves the destructive instinct. The mechanism working here is a regression of the person to a pre-genital stage which allows the impulses to be transformed into impulses of aggression. This means that the death instincts have been set free on their own to attack the object of objection. The id, in other words, may have murderous impulses against some person. This will not do, and the ego responds through such defenses as reaction-formation, a construction of a desire just the opposite of the real wish. But because the super-ego has direct association and connection with the id, it reacts to the impulses of the id by striking against the ego, as though the ego were responsible. The ego is then caught in the double-bind of trying to defend and protect itself from murderous urges from the id and from severe chastisement by the super-ego. The result

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<sup>44</sup>Ibid., 77.

is torment, a characteristic of obsessional neurosis.<sup>45</sup>

The destructive instincts can wreak havoc on the organism, and if internally directed, they can be dangerous. The person thus has to handle in some manner these destructive impulses arising from the death instinct. One way to try to render the impulses harmless is fusion with erotic components; another way is to direct the aggression outward. But the latter means runs into difficulties with the super-ego, which serves to check impulses of aggression and attempt to suppress these desires:

It is remarkable that the more a man checks his aggressive tendencies towards others the more tyrannical, that is aggressive, he becomes in his ego-ideal. The ordinary view sees the situation the other way round: the standard set up by the ego-ideal seems to be the motive for the suppression of aggressiveness. The fact remains, however, as we have stated it: the more a man controls his aggressiveness, the more intense become the aggressive tendencies of his ego-ideal against the ego. It is like a displacement, a turning round upon the self.<sup>46</sup>

A person is not only seen to have a destructive instinct within him/her, but one that cries out for release. And it will find an object, one way or another. If it is not released upon an external object, then the destructive instinct will seek discharge upon an internal part through the super-ego.<sup>47</sup>

The mechanism for the destructive instinct proceeding through the super-ego is integrally related to the Oedipal conflict, from whence the super-ego arose, from an identification with the father. From his theory, Freud knows that identifications involve a de-sexualized or sublimated energy from the libido. But sublimation implies a defusing of

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<sup>45</sup>Ibid., 78-79.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., 79-80.

the energy from the erotic components. The erotic components no longer have then the ability to couple with the aggressive impulses and so render them harmless. The destructive instincts are thus set free, appearing in the desire towards aggression and destruction. This then appears in the super-ego in the form of commandments: "You should..." Freud sees the development of internal aggression as an inevitable and universal process. The ego in attempting to gain some access and control of the id releases the destructive components which redound upon the ego through punishment inflicted by the super-ego.<sup>48</sup>

Aggression in the form of the destructive instinct plays a very important role in Freud's formulations of the psychic workings of the individual. The ego is in the precarious position of trying to mediate between three threats: the external world, the impulses of the id, and the raging of the super-ego. By its forming identifications through sublimation (thus protecting the person from the threat imposed by the Oedipal conflict), the ego causes a defusing of the energies helping to hold in check the libido of the id, and in so doing allows itself to become the target of the death instincts from the super-ego. Aggression, both external and internal, plays a role in the development of the person from a very early time.<sup>49</sup>

A review of Freud's findings concerning aggression is in order at this point. Aggression is linked with destruction and is considered to be an instinct opposing the eros, or binding instincts. However, the

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<sup>48</sup>Ibid., 80-81.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., 83-84.

two are usually fused in some form, even in the clearest manifestation of the death instinct-- sadism. Other evidences of the destructive instinct are found in pathological states such as melancholia and obsessional neuroses. The aggressive instinct must have its discharge; the path of discharge is of indifference to the instinct. It may be coupled with erotic components or it may be directed externally. Suppression of it results in its internal direction from the super-ego in a form of retroflection, a turning around of the aggression on itself.

Aggression, being instinctual, is related to the organism's development, and through the Oedipal conflict comes to lodge in the super-ego and is directed against the ego. Aggression is integral to Freud's understanding of how the human mind works at the deepest levels through the three differentiations of the mental processes. Aggression is thus part of man's deepest inner workings and shows itself in external aggression, certain pathological states, and the formation of the conscience.

Freud's picture of the interaction of the three mental differentiations does not spell complete hopelessness for the ego. His system of psychoanalysis attempted to bolster the strength of the ego over the id. The id is powerful, having two routes of influence upon the ego: that from the id itself and that from the super-ego which is connected to the id. Help against the passions of the id and the raging of the super-ego is to be found in the strengthening of the ego over the id, a task which Freud's psychoanalysis claims to do.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>50</sup>Ibid., 82.

The conclusion which can be drawn from exploration into this portion of Freud's work is that he considers aggression to be destructive, instinctual and inevitable. Aggression is a general characteristic of all persons. Its components influence the development of the person, as well as his/her conscious and unconscious activities. It can be somewhat controlled by bolstering the strength of the ego, though ultimately the destructive instinct in the individual will succeed in bringing a cessation of life.

#### Aggression On The Social Level

Freud pushed his ideas on aggression beyond the formulations in The Ego and The Id. While he dealt with the individual and his/her mental processes in this work, he turns his explorations into man's aggression in relation to the culture in the book, Civilization and Its Discontents.

Motivated by questions from a religious friend, Freud states that the purpose of life is to be found in the pleasure principle, something which life does not seem suited for satisfying. The three obstacles and sources of pain arise from the external world, our own body and relations with other people. It is the third source, that of other people, that most humans have trouble admitting as a problem source:

This contention holds that what we call civilization is largely responsible for our misery, and that we should be much happier if we gave it up and returned to primitive conditions. I call this contention astonishing because, in whatever way we may define the concept of civilization, it is a certain fact that all the things with



which we seek to protect ourselves against the threats that emanate from the sources of suffering are part of that very civilization.<sup>51</sup>

Looking for possible reasons for this effect, Freud brings forth the renunciation of instincts, a process which involves sublimation of the libido, the energy of the sexual instinct. One example of this is the husband who must divert some of his sexual energy away from the family to support it. Another example is found in the precept: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." This example of aim-inhibited love (sublimated libido) clashes with man's aggression. Freud says that the problem with such a precept is that men basically have a streak of aggression in them:

As a result, their neighbour is for them not only a potential helper or sexual object, but also someone who tempts them to satisfy their aggressiveness on him, to exploit his capacity for work without compensation, to use him sexually without his consent, to seize his possessions, to humiliate him, to cause him pain, to torture and to kill him.<sup>52</sup>

Though it may appear latent, this aggression is a part of human nature:

As a rule this cruel aggressiveness waits for some provocation or puts itself at the service of some other purpose, whose goal might also have been reached by milder measures. In circumstances that are favourable to it, when the mental counter-forces which ordinarily inhibit it are out of action, it also manifests itself spontaneously and reveals man as a savage beast to whom consideration towards his own kind is something alien.<sup>53</sup>

But aggression is the reason for the precept of loving one's neighbor as oneself, because of the disrupting effect of aggression:

The existence of this inclination to aggression, ... is the factor which disturbs our relations with our neighbour and which forces

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<sup>51</sup>Sigmund Freud, "Civilization and Its Discontents," in his Standard Edition..., XXI, 86.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., XXI, 111.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., XXI, 112.

civilization into such a high expenditure. In consequence of this primary mutual hostility of human beings, civilized society is perpetually threatened with disintegration.<sup>54</sup>

Efforts towards identification and aim-inhibited love relationships (friendships) have only had a weak bonding effect in civilization's past. The problem is that persons derive a great deal of satisfaction from this inclination towards aggression as evidence by its pervasiveness. Besides that, it is an instinctual force:

If civilization imposes such great sacrifices not only on man's sexuality but on his aggressivity, we can understand better why it is hard for him to be happy in that civilization.<sup>55</sup>

Part of a person's unhappiness from living in civilization is that the civilization (for its own unity) demands that the individual renounce his/her aggressive instinct.

Once again Freud draws in his formulation of the life and death instincts during his discussion on aggression. Their dual existence he re-affirms, as well as their connection with one another. In line with previous works, he says that sadism is the clearest manifestation of the life and death instincts coupling, the result being the erotic component though twisted towards the ends of the death instinct, still achieves its satisfaction, too. A case of the death instinct appearing without any erotic component is that of a blind rage of destructiveness. Though there is no erotic component to give satisfaction, the person still receives satisfaction, a good deal of it. This is related to narcissistic

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<sup>54</sup>Ibid.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., XXI, 115.

enjoyment relating to the ego and its initial seeking of omnipotence:

But even where it emerges (the death instinct) without any sexual purpose, in the blindest fury of destructiveness, we cannot fail to recognize that the satisfaction of the instinct is accompanied by an extraordinarily high degree of narcissistic enjoyment, owing to its presenting the ego with a fulfillment of the latter's old wishes for omnipotence.<sup>56</sup>

This is followed by a most revealing passage concerning the relation of the death instinct and the ego:

The instinct of destruction, moderated and tamed, and, as it were inhibited in its aim, must, when it is directed towards objects, provide the ego with the satisfaction of its vital needs and with control over nature.<sup>57</sup>

Freud states the idea that the destructive instinct may aid the ego in its efforts which are basically preservation of the person. As has been noted earlier, one of the functions of the ego is to mediate between the external world and the internal world of the id. The ego is to safeguard the organism against outside harm, and one way it achieves this safety is through the reality principle, the harnessing of the instinctual energies proceeding from the id. Yet another way, although unrealistic, is to control the external world. This desire for omnipotence is one of the earliest wishes of the ego. Freud is implying in his work here that the destructive instinct aids the ego in achieving some power over the external world which the ego needs for mediating between the external world and the internal one.

Freud's view of aggression serving the interests of the ego and self-preservation is out of line with earlier statements in his work,

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<sup>56</sup>Ibid., XXI, 121.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid.

"Instincts and Their Vicissitudes." In both, aggression aids the survival of the person through the means of the ego. The reaction is in reaction to and directed against the external world. In both, aggression can serve a natural and a useful purpose for the person. Where the two differ is that in this 1923 work, he lifts up the extreme pleasure there is to be had in omnipotence and that enjoyment accompanies many forms of destruction. In the earlier work, aggression was seen to be a reaction of intense feeling towards an object of displeasure which was to be repelled and destroyed. It was attacked because it did not give pleasure; here destruction is acknowledged to carry with it its own enjoyment. Freud presents a keen insight with this statement as he intimates difficulty of renouncing aggression. It can function for purposes of survival and its appearance can bestow a great deal of enjoyment. The individual can receive delight from the destruction.

Yet the problem remains for Freud that aggression is the single greatest threat to civilization. As he concludes that aggression is original, instinctual and a derivative from the death instinct, he states the duality of the life and death instincts in bold, sweeping terms:

And now, I think, the meaning of the evolution of civilization is no longer obscure to us. It must present the struggle between Eros and Death, between the instinct of life and the instinct of destruction, as it works itself out in the human species. This struggle is what all life essentially consists of, and the evolution of civilization may therefore be simply described as the struggle for life of the human species.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>58</sup>Ibid., 112.

The same struggle that goes on the cellular level that was discussed in the book, Beyond the Pleasure Principle, assumes the significance of social dimensions. The very evolution and survival of the human species is at stake in this warring between the two instincts in the arena of civilization.

Freud then explores how civilization curbs these aggressive instincts, which if allowed unbridled reign would lead to the dissolution of society itself. His answer is that the individual's aggression is turned back on himself/herself. In agreement with his earlier thoughts in The Ego and The Id, he states that the aggression is directed back at the ego by way of the super-ego and the formation of the conscience:

There it (aggression) is taken over by a portion of the ego, which sets itself over against the rest of the ego as super-ego, and which now, in the form of 'conscience', is ready to put into action against the ego the same harsh aggressiveness that the ego would have liked to satisfy upon other, extraneous individuals.<sup>59</sup>

The aggression of the individual is curbed by turning from release upon outside persons to internal targets with the same degree of fierceness as was intended for the outside objects. And again similar to his earlier writings, Freud says that the harsh attack of the super-ego upon the ego results in guilt:

The tension between the harsh super-ego and the ego that is subjected to it, is called by us the sense of guilt; it expresses itself as a need for punishment.<sup>60</sup>

Freud investigates the origin of guilt and finds two: the fear of an authority and the fear of the super-ego. The first finds its

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<sup>59</sup>Ibid., 123.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid.

roots in childhoos when the person is helpless and dependent, and fears a loss of love and possible punishment by one superior in strength. Guilt arises when one does something which might incur punishment by one in authority. However, in the second case, the fear of the super-ego, the renunciation of instinct occurring in the fear of the authority becomes internalized with the person punishing himself/herself for even having the desires. A vicious cycle develops of instinctual renunciation leading to conscience which leads to further instinctual renunciation.<sup>61</sup>

Freud tries to reconcile two views of conscience. One, reflecting his ideas from The Ego and The Id, states that renunciation of aggressive instinct leads to this aggression being taken by the super-ego to attack the ego. The other view is that the internalized conscience is an extension of the original aggression of the external authority. Freud's solution to the apparent quandary resembles the resolution of the Oedipal conflict. In response to the external authority (usually his parents), the child develops quite a reaction of aggression, which he must renounce. A desire for satisfaction of a wish for revenge he cannot fulfill due to his dependent position. Instead by means of identification, he incorporates the authority into himself where he can attack. By this identification the super-ego is formed and has the aggression that would have been directed towards the external authority. Instead, the ego is attacked. Thus the harshness of the super-ego formed does not necessarily have anything to do with the se-

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<sup>61</sup>Ibid., XXI, 124-128.

verity of the aggression of the authority. The harshness is related to the degree of aggression the child desires against the authority. However, Freud does add that of course the amount of aggression, particularly if it is of a large or punitive nature, will play some part in the severity of the child's super-ego. Thus the formation and harshness of the super-ego is formed from both genetic and environmental factors.<sup>62</sup>

The case with the super-ego on the individual level is analogous to the social situation, Freud says. Communities have super-egos, and there is an interaction between the individual and social super-egos. Perhaps the manner of approaching the situation is also to be gleaned from the individual situation. Here psychotherapy often works in opposition to the super-ego whose demands are unrealistic. Not only does the super-ego pay little attention to the pleasure of the ego, but pays little heed to the resistances in the external world for the completion of its exacting orders. Psycho-therapy attempts to lower the demands of the super-ego of the individuals. However, Freud quickly admits he is talking in terms of an analogy, and that is usually precarious.<sup>63</sup>

Freud's book, Civilization and Its Discontents, develops his thought on aggression to the realm of civilization. Aggression is considered to be civilization's greatest threat, and emanates from man's instinctual destructive tendency relating to the death instinct. Civilization is the arena of the struggle between the death and life instincts. The bonding instinct, the Eros, requires a certain amount of

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<sup>62</sup>Ibid., XXI, 129-130.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid., XXI, 141-144.

instinctual renunciation of aggression. This, however, is accomplished at a price. The instinctual aggression is turned back upon the individual through the super-ego and by the formation of a conscience. With the conscience comes general feelings of guilt relating to the super-ego. This guilt is a part of the malaise that results from civilization.

Other concepts are proposed concerning aggression. Sadism is again presented as a manifestation of the destructive instinct. Aggression is stated to be of aid to the ego for its aim of self-preservation, and that destructive tendencies have a pleasure all their own, regardless of sexual components. Also presented is the case of aggression of the child, whose dependent, helpless, subordinate status requires the child to renunciate his/her aggressive instincts towards figures of authority. The child's aggression is instead turned upon itself through the super-ego and the conscience.

Though Freud in Civilization and Its Discontents devotes little time to proposing solutions to man's aggressiveness, particularly in the societal realm, he addresses the question of war in his letter, "Why War?" Prompting this discussion is a letter from Albert Einstein, the famous physicist. On the behalf of a League of Nations committee, Einstein writes to ask Freud if he can shed illumination from his research on the problem of war and what can be done to stop future wars from occurring. Interestingly enough, Einstein in formulating the



question proposes a lust in man for hatred and destruction.<sup>64</sup>

Freud answers by suggesting that wars be overcome by placing power in the hands of a larger unit and by increasing the emotional ties of persons to each other and to the idea of that unity. But this idea has problems because somehow this power must be assembled and given to a larger unit, such as the League of Nations (and this hasn't been done yet) and because throughout history the type of identification and unity needed has not appeared very often.<sup>65</sup>

Freud then proceeds to another aspect of the problem-- the death instinct. He again states the existence of the Eros instinct which preserves and unites, and the existence of the destructive or aggressive instinct which seeks to destroy and kill. This destructive instinct has a part in wars, particularly when combined with some of the erotic components of a person:

Thus, for instance, the instinct of self-preservation is certainly of an erotic kind, but it must nevertheless have aggressiveness at its disposal if it is to fulfil its purpose.<sup>66</sup>

By the nature of this destructiveness being derived from the death instinct, it must be turned outwards against an external object. When it does so, it becomes seen as destructiveness. Yet some remains directed inwards by means of the conscience. A dilemma occurs for the person. Nature would seem to justify the discharge of this destructiveness which

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<sup>64</sup>Albert Einstein, "Why War?" in Freud, Standard Edition..., XXII, 199-202.

<sup>65</sup>Sigmund Freud, "Response to Why War?" in his Standard Edition ..., XXII, 205-208.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid., XXII, 209.

which is so odious for the good of the whole.<sup>67</sup>

Freud comes to the conclusion that aggression is a part of man that cannot be banished at will:

For our immediate purpose then, this much follows from what has been said: there is no use in trying to get rid of men's aggressive inclinations.<sup>68</sup>

Freud says shortly thereafter:

In any case, as you yourself have remarked, there is no question of getting rid entirely of human aggressive impulses; it is enough to try to divert them to such an extent that they need not find expression in war.<sup>69</sup>

Admitting the deep-rootedness of aggression in humans, Freud suggests that there might be some indirect means of countering war. As destruction is a derivative of the death instinct, and as the death instinct is opposed by the eros instinct, it is only logical to try increasing the Eros. This might be accomplished by encouraging friendship ties (aim-inhibited love) something along the lines of loving one's neighbor. The other indirect means might be that of identification in which people bond together on the basis of commonalities. Education is yet another means that holds promise.<sup>70</sup>

Despite the presence of the instinctual aggression, Freud hopes that humanity will evolve to the pacifist position. He tells Einstein that people can oppose war and think it repugnant because there is a constitutional basis for this revulsion. The combination of cultural efforts and the dread of warfare might with time result in the cessation

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<sup>67</sup>Ibid., XXII, 209-211.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid., XXII, 212.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid., XXII, 211.

<sup>70</sup>Ibid., XXII, 213.

of all war making.<sup>71</sup>

Freud's answer to Einstein contains and re-affirms the elements of thought on aggression developed in previous works. Perhaps the new items on aggression is his acceptance of it as a fact of life presently, even on the corporate realm. Aggression appears deep-rooted and almost inevitable. Freud's proposing the bolstering of the Eros to oppose and thus to counteract the destructive instinct is a logical implication of his earlier formulations.

To summarize, the following conclusions can be drawn from the study of Freud's concept of aggression in the death instinct:

- (1) The death instinct is a vital part of his theory of aggression, and this is derived from considerations internal to Freud's theories on dreams. As a biological entity, the death instinct is understood to be a real instinct which opposes the Eros instinct, the life instinct.
- (2) Throughout his discussion, sadism is presented as a manifestation of the death instinct, albeit coupled with erotic components.
- (3) Aggression is understood from instinctual terms. It is connected with destruction and is derived from the death instinct.
- (4) The aggressive impulses may be handled by the person through coupling them with sexual components and seeking satisfaction by this manner, by directing the instinctual force externally or by turning it back upon oneself.
- (5) A person's very deepest mental processes involve aggression through

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<sup>71</sup>Ibid., XXII, 214-215.

the super-ego which attacks the ego in its precarious position of mediating between the external world, the id and the super-ego.

- (6) Aggression is considered the most serious threat to civilization. Society protects itself by having the aggression be turned inwards through a process similar to the Oedipal conflict in which identification occurs (in this case aggression against an authority figure). From this is formed the conscience and the attending feeling of guilt, the price the individual pays for the renunciation of his/her aggressive instincts.
- (7) The ego may use the destructive instinct in its service for self-preservation, and obtains a narcissistic enjoyment from the satisfaction of the destructive instinct.
- (8) Human aggression has a part in wars. The aggression is so deeply rooted that it cannot be gotten rid of directly but may be counter-acted through indirect means such as enhancing the force of the Eros instinct.

#### DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE "EARLY" AND "LATE" FREUD

Most of Freud's thought on aggression comes on the heels of his formulating the death instinct. Nevertheless, an attempt to synthesize Freud's entire thinking concerning human aggression can be made by comparing his thoughts before and after the proposal of the death instinct.

From the very beginnings of his writings, aggression is associated with the sexual perversion of sadism. The understanding of their relationship does, however, change. While it is first considered to be a component of the sexual instinct aiding the satisfaction of that in-

instinct, aggression in sadism is later understood as a destructive component in the perversion. Sadism comes to be seen as a condition of the destructive instinct and the erotic instinct becoming coupled, allowing the destructive instinct's aims, while also achieving satisfaction of the erotic instinct.

In both the aggressive instinct becomes associated with destruction, though for a while in earlier writings, aggression seemed defined in terms of mastering an object, of actively seeking that object. As a destructive element, aggression is seen by both periods to be involved in the early development of a person. In the earlier writings, aggression is seen to be a function of the ego to repel objects of unpleasure. Aggression arose in service of the preservative instinct (ego) and was learned by interaction of the organism with the environment. In later writings, aggression is not learned but is instinctual. It basically does not serve the ego instincts but is intrinsically working against them. The two views are contradictory and reflect Freud's progression of thought with time.

Though earlier Freud had proposed aggression as responding to a specific situation or object, later in The Ego and The Id suggests that acts of revenge (aggression) may be directed indiscriminately, if the person has enough destructive energy pent up within and seeking discharge. Earlier in the essay, "Instincts and Their Vicissitudes," he maintains that an appearance of hate is related to an unresolved earlier state of personality development involving love. The "later" Freud does not relate aggression to an unresolved stage in development. It is part of the death instinct.

### FREUD'S ANTHROPOLOGY OF AGGRESSION

From the investigations into the salient portions of Freud's works dealing with aggression, conclusions concerning his anthropology of aggression are now possible.

- (1) Aggression is instinctual. Deeply-rooted, it is involved in man's development, his thought processes, and it affects him every moment in his conscious and unconscious behavior.
- (2) Aggression is considered to be destructive.
- (3) Aggression is universally shared by humans.
- (4) Aggression can play a part in the survival of the individual, although paradoxically, it is silently and relentlessly working for the destruction of the individual. Thus the destructive instinct can couple with the preservative instinct. An example might be the attacking another person or object which threatens the individual's existence.
- (5) Great satisfaction and enjoyment can be obtained through a discharge of destruction.
- (6) Aggression can be directed at a specific object for a specific reason or it can appear indiscriminately in certain situations of neurosis.
- (7) Aggression is a serious threat to the interests of civilization and must be checked. For the individual, however, this poses a dilemma. In the interests of civilization, the person must renounce his/her instinctual inclinations towards aggression. But in so doing, the individual jeopardizes his/her own existence by internalizing the aggression, which seeks destruction.

- (8) Aggression may be directed inwardly or outwardly. Inwardly directed aggression results in the formation of the conscience. In extreme cases this internal aggression may result in pathology, such as melancholia (marked by depression) and obsessional neurosis (torment).
- (9) Human aggression exists on a corporate scale and plays a part in wars. This too is to be counteracted in whatever ways are possible.

## CHAPTER II

## HUMAN ANGER IN THE BIBLE

Anger is not a repressed word in the Bible. Nor are man's acts of aggression glossed over. The literature is replete with mention of anger, conflict and hostility. The Old Testament in particular does not try to hide human potential for savagery. It narrates accounts of outrage, revenge-seeking, wars and atrocities. But the interest of the Biblical writers is not in portraying humans as a destructive species, as they are in depicting the history of a people and their understanding of their relationship to their God. People are seen in the context of the historical-legendary, political, cultic spheres, as well as range of everyday living. Consequently, the spectrum of emotions so common to all persons are seen in important figures of the traditions. Because of this wide range of time, persons and situations, the Bible is a valuable source for the understanding of anger.

This study will limit itself to direct usages of the words for anger or its synonyms. This will be done for two reasons: (1) to limit the number of passages that we will explore, and more importantly: (2) to limit the discussion to references of explicit mention to reduce possible ambiguity of interpretation. This provides firmer grounds for exploration. Without doubt, there are several other passages which would involve anger or hostility by implication. One might infer this presence from the tone, such as some of the prophets or of Paul, or one might conclude this from the content, such as accounts of warfare or individual battles. These passages abound. But unless the direct men-



tion of anger is made, the danger remains of reading items into the passage. To reduce this hazard, this study will limit its inquiry to explicit references of anger.

The scope will be further limited to passages involving human anger. This is for at least two reasons. The first is to reduce the number of passages to be inspected to a manageable quantity. The second reason is that this study is concerned with an anthropology of anger. While inquiry into God's anger may be interesting, it is beyond the scope and focus of this study. An investigation into God's anger would cast the study into vast issues of theological nature.

#### OLD TESTAMENT USAGE OF ANGER

A novel approach is needed to grapple with the varied amount of Old Testament references to human anger. Classifying the passages according to the different words for anger proves inadequate. Too often the meaning of the word depends upon the context of its usage in the passage. And meanings for the same word vary according to the specific text. Nor does a study along form-critical considerations prove sufficient. The content does not prove to have a significant relationship to the form. As this study is interested in both content and context, a more fruitful approach is needed.

An approach having richer yields is a thematic one. Passages in this study will be grouped into collections which deal with anger in a certain context and content. All the passages will be included under six groupings: wise man- foolish man, righteous man- wicked man, man of anger (hot-headed and quick to anger), king's anger, descriptive, and

collective references of anger. Each will be explored separately. From conclusions drawn concerning the attitudes and treatments towards anger of each collection, an attempt to formulate a comprehensive Old Testament anthropology will be made.

### Foolish Man- Wise Man Collection

Passages referring to the wise and to the foolish man are numerous, particularly in the book of Proverbs. Usually an antithesis is established between them. In general the passages are of the nature of didactic observations, rather than imperatives or exhortations. Of the many verses mentioning the foolish and the wise, a few do make mention of anger.

Proverbs 29:11 "A fool (לֵדֹבֵד) gives full vent to his anger (רוּחַ אֵתָּוֶן) but the prudent man (דָּבָר טָהוֹר) quietly holds it back."

Proverbs 12:16 The vexation (דָּבָר טָהוֹר) of a fool (לֵדֹבֵד) is known at once, but the shrewd man (דָּבָר טָהוֹר) covers dishonor. (RSV)<sup>1</sup>

These two passages exemplify the antithesis but contain certain ambiguities. In the first passage the word for anger is "spirit," which is occasionally used this way. However, it can also be applied to the general understanding of all emotions. In the second passage, the word used, דָּבָר טָהוֹר, also seems to imply a broader understanding of usage than merely anger. Though anger may be a part of vexation, the term seems connote a state of displeasure or of being very unhappy in a frustrated and disturbed manner.

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<sup>1</sup>The use of RSV will be used from this point to denote the translation of the Revised Standard Version of the Bible.

The words for fool and for prudent man refer to a tradition concerning these. The two terms for used here,  $\text{לֵאמֹר}$ , and  $\text{לֵאמֹר}$ , are pretty well interchangeable. They both represent a person or attitude which is opposed to the prudent man and thus considered bad and to be avoided. The term,  $\text{לֵאמֹר}$ , has several references which describe him. He despises wisdom, knowledge and discipline (Proverbs 1:7, 15:5); his babbling brings his own destruction (Proverbs 10:8, 10:14); he dies for lack of sense (Proverbs 10:21); he mocks guilt (Proverbs 14:9); he brings grief to his father and ruin to him (Proverbs 17:25, 19:13). His life, then, is one of sorrow for himself and those closest to him, as the fool seems to have no sense or respect. In similar fashion  $\text{לֵאמֹר}$ , the other term for fool, hates knowledge (Proverbs 1:22); finds no pleasure in understanding (Proverbs 18:2), brings strife and utters slander (Proverbs 18:6, 10:18), brings ruin to himself (Proverbs 18:7), brings sorrow to his mother (Proverbs 10:1), and he deserves flogging (Proverbs 19:29, 26:3). The fool seems to be good for little, causes trouble and is generally despised by the writers of the wisdom literature. The fool is a problem not only for his parents but for his society as well.

In contrast to the fool is the man of wisdom, prudence and understanding. As the fool is deemed poorly, so is the wise man esteemed highly. He lays up knowledge and spreads it when he speaks (Proverbs 10:14, 10:7); his ways preserve him (Proverbs 14:3); wise conduct is his pleasure (Proverbs 10:23); he makes his father glad (Proverbs 10:1). Unlike the fool, the wise person listens to counsel (Proverbs 12:15); he seeks knowledge (Proverbs 18:15); he profits from constructive criticism (Proverbs 9:8-9). So vast is the difference between the fool and

the wise man, that at one point the writer of Ecclesiastes proclaims that it is better to be poor, young and wise than to be a king who is old and foolish (4:13). There is quite a chasm of realities between the fool and the wise person. One was not to be a fool.

The brief inspection illuminates the tradition surrounding the use of these terms. It is with the fool that anger is associated. He gives an unrestrained expression of his anger; the wise man holds it back. The fool must express his displeasure immediately; he cannot hold back his troubles nor the problems frustrating him. What is attributed to the fool is a certain manner of handling these angry, excited feelings: he is impatient and unrestrained in expression. In contrast the wise have control over themselves. The manner of expressing anger involves knowledge, prudence and good sense.

The reference in the second passage to the shrewd suggests a social setting, perhaps a public one. The setting seems a general one involving others in a relational context. The passages address the life situation of persons blowing up and wreaking fury upon one another. Such unrestrained venting of anger tends to arouse resentment and enmity. The prudent person does not do this (certainly not publically!). The shrewd person has the finesse to remain silent about certain areas which might arouse antagonism. Unchecked and immediate expressions of displeasure are considered traits of a fool. Avoidance and restraint of anger are thus urged. Such prudence tends to lessen social and interpersonal problems.

The fool creates a burden for those about him by engendering disruption:

Proverbs 17:25 "A foolish man(<sup>לִּפְתֹּ֑י</sup>) is a grief(<sup>עֲצֻבָּ֑</sup>) to his father and bitterness(<sup>קָדְחָ֑הּ</sup>) to her who bore him." (RSV)

Proverbs 27:3 "A stone is heavy and sand is weighty, but a fool's(<sup>לִּפְתֹּ֑י</sup>) provocation(<sup>עֲצֻבָּ֑</sup>) is heavier than both." (RSV)

Proverbs 20:3 "It is an honor for a man to keep aloof from strife, but every fool(<sup>לִּפְתֹּ֑י</sup>) will be quarrelling.(<sup>יִלְחָ֑ם</sup>)" (RSV)

Bitterness can be considered to be a form of anger, a very deep one in reaction to a specific or general situation. The reaction of the mother to her son the fool is bitterness. The word in the second passage, <sup>עֲצֻבָּ֑</sup>, is the same as used in Proverbs 12:16, where it meant "vexation." The term's nuances suggest an understanding of a general form of excited displeasure.

The interaction of the fool and the wise is revealing:

Proverbs 29:9 "If a wise man(<sup>חָכָ֑ם</sup>) has an argument with a fool(<sup>לִּפְתֹּ֑י</sup>) the fool only rages(<sup>יִלְחָ֑ם</sup>) and laughs, and there is no quiet." (RSV)

The term used for "rage" has connotations of quaking and shivering, such as the earth trembling in Proverbs 30:21 or Amos 8:8. Suggested from these and other texts is a turmoil involving physical quivering shaking. One can almost imagine the scene suggested here. An argument based supposedly upon reason and prudence is answered by anger and hostility. The raging, laughing commotion indicate an immature non-attentiveness and a lack of seriousness on the part of the fool, cutting off possible discussion. There is no arguing with a fool. Instead of responding decently or appropriately, the fool answers by hostile jeering. Again anger is associated with the fool. His raging is inappropriate and disruptive. Such a response cuts against the very fabric of

society itself, which must be bonded with reason, good-will, understanding and co-operation.

In other situations, the fool rages-- and not only at the wise:

Proverbs 19:3 "When a man's folly (נְלִיָּץ) brings his way to ruin his heart rages (רָעַץ) against the Lord." (RSV)

The term used, רָעַץ, is defined generally by Gesenius as meaning "to be out of humor, vexed; to be enraged," and in particular, to "fret against."<sup>2</sup> In noun form, the word means a storming, such as in Jonah 1:15 in a mention of the raging of the sea. The term seems to have overtones of fury and violence. This raging is the reaction of a fool to an end that the wisdom literature writers observe as being natural and necessary for the fool. Yet Yahweh is blamed, and the anger seems to be an expression of extreme frustration and of evading responsibility of his own destruction. It is the fool who rages against God.

A striking passage directly connects anger with fools:

Ecclesiastes 7:9 "Be not quick to anger (רָעַץ) for anger (רָעַץ) lodges in the bosom of fools." (רָעַץ) (RSV)

This wisdom saying is in imperative form, having a motivation clause. The admonition is to restrain oneself from a fast show of anger. The rationale is that anger stays inside the fool. The word for "lodge" is נָחַץ, which implies an abiding of long-term nature. The word for anger is רָעַץ, which has been translated previously as vexation, provocation and even grief, so that the anger here is one of general nature. The passage has at least two implications. One is that of a social

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<sup>2</sup>William Gesenius, A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), 277.

sense: the person who is wise is not quick to become angry because such anger does not vanish upon appearance, but rather stays inside the heart of fools. Anger thus only begets anger, particularly when dealing with the fool. The implication for social interactions is that it is wise to avoid a hasty expression of anger lest this result in the harboring of grudges by others and in the festering of resentments. The other implication is that anger of a long duration is directly linked with the tradition of the fool. The fool hangs on to his anger; he does not forget. The passage thus indicates two negative statements about anger: it is neither wise to have a hasty show of temper nor to keep an anger for a long time.

Just as the fool is associated with anger, so is the wise person linked with a turning away of wrath:

Proverbs 29:8 "Scoffers set a city aflame,  
but wise men(חֲכָמִים) turn away wrath(אַף)." (RSV)

Unlike the other passages in this collection, the word used for anger is one of the commonly used ones, אַף. The antithesis is between scoffers, and the wise man. Scoffers are often linked with the fool (Proverbs 19:29). The wisdom passage is one of observation and of a general nature. Implied is a social sense of handling one's anger. The scoffer turns his anger into social violence. On the other hand, the wise man handles wrath by turning it away(שָׁטָה). As the latter phrase is in a general sense, it must be assumed that wrath may apply either to the wrath of the wise man himself or to the wrath of others.

In conclusion, the mention of anger does appear in the wisdom tradition of the wise and foolish man. Anger is associated with the

fool, a very unfavorable association. Either by direct exhortation or by didactic implication, the reader of the wisdom sayings (or the person in the learning situation presupposed by this literature) is admonished to avoid anger. Quick expressions of temper, unrestrained displays and prolonged resentments are considered as a characteristic of a fool and thus are to be avoided. The wise man is not associated with anger, but instead possesses the care and control to restrain himself and to turn away anger, which has a potentiality for destruction and harm to relationships.

Finally, the words used in this collection, with the exception of one passage, are words not frequently employed and carry an ambiguous and general sense. The anger referred to seems to be less of a nature of a specific and quick-resolving form and more that of a general raging and excited displeasure.

#### Wicked- Righteous Man Collection

Another tradition is the antithesis of wicked man and righteous man. Only a few passages of this tradition mention anger, but the ones which do are instructive.

Psalm 37:8-9 "Refrain from anger(אֵת אַפְּךָ), and forsake wrath(וְאַחַר אַפְּךָ)!  
Fret not yourself; it only tends to evil. (אַחַר אַפְּךָ)  
For the wicked(רָשָׁעִים) shall be cut off;  
but those who wait for the Lord shall possess the  
land." (RSV)

The passage is from a didactic wisdom psalm whose concern is with the righteous. Its purpose is to instruct students in the way of the צַדִּיקִים, zadokim, who are the righteous or priestly group. The psalm's method of teaching is contrasting the wicked to the righteous and ex-



horting the listener to trust in Yahweh. This passage is a part of a larger set of passages containing a series of imperatives admonishing adherence towards acts of allegiance and trust in Yahweh. The student who seeks righteousness is not to fret because of the wicked but is rather to trust and to take delight in Yahweh, to commit his way to Yahweh, to be still and wait patiently for Him, and to refrain from anger.

The word used for "refrain,"  $\text{נָחַם}$ , implies a setting go, a relaxing, an abandoning,<sup>3</sup> while the other word,  $\text{שָׁחַח}$ , is a standard one for leaving behind and abandoning.<sup>4</sup> Implied is an anger already present that the person addressed is to let go. The motivation clause in verse 8, "it ends only to evil( $\text{שָׁחַח}$ )" follows from the imperative, "fret yourself not," found in verses 1 and 7, a relationship suggesting that the subject admonished against is envy of the wicked. The situation addressed is that of the prospering of those considered wicked. Feeling some discontent and perhaps bewilderment at this state of affairs, the righteous might be tempted to imitate the way of the wicked. Instead they should keep their faithfulness towards Yahweh, who will vindicate His way and the way of the righteous who trust in Him through the eschatological hope of the possessing of the land by the meek. This is the context in which the terms of anger are used.

The terms for anger are words frequently used. The term,  $\text{אָנָּה}$ , is also used to mean "nostril," "nose," and "face" in other passages.<sup>5</sup> Its

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 951.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 60.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 736.

use for anger is common through most forms of Biblical literature. The association of the word with nose and nostril implies a possible snorting. The other term,  $\text{נִחַם}$ , is derived from the verb  $\text{נָחַם}$ , meaning "to be hot."<sup>6</sup> The noun form has the connotation of heat and rage, implying a very hot anger. These terms are used in reference to a reaction of the righteous to the success of the wicked, who are not supposed to prosper. The wicked are those who plot against the righteous, use force for perpetuating injustice upon the poor and the needy, and will thus be cut off, wither, and perish.

The righteous person is not to respond with anger because the wicked will have their day of accounting. Instead the righteous are to trust in Yahweh and His ways. Thus, a refraining from anger is an indication of trust in Yahweh. The admonition comes from cultic considerations. Forsaking wrath is a sign of commitment to Yahweh. Anger is not seen as being the proper response by one who trusts.

Another reference is similar to Psalm 37:

Psalm 4:4 "Be angry( $\text{אֵרָגֵז}$ ), but sin not( $\text{אַל תִּחַלֵּל}$ );  
commune with your own hearts on your beds, and be  
silent." (RSV)

The word used for anger is the same term used in Proverbs 29:9 and can also be translated as "tremble," casting some ambiguity into the passage. This psalm, unlike the preceding one, is concerned with an individual concern. The psalm is one of supplication, and the situation addressed is that of the writer ending in an isolation resulting from a commitment to Yahweh. The phrase, "be angry(tremble) but sin not," is

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 404.

addressed to the group of persons that are referred to in verse two. A series of imperatives is issued for one to place trust in Yahweh. Again the control of anger is a sign of commitment to Yahweh. The admonition assumes a generalized import, as the group addressed is not as easily identifiable as that in Psalm 37.

While the righteous are admonished to refrain from anger, the wicked are depicted as manifesting it.

Psalm 112:10 "The wicked (וְשֹׁרֵר) man sees it and is angry (וְלֹא יִשְׁכָּח); he gnashes his teeth and melts away; the desire of the wicked man comes to nought." (RSV)

This psalm is a didactic wisdom piece which centers mostly upon the person who fears Yahweh and who is righteous (יָשָׁר). The wicked man is only given a passing mention in the antithesis, a style indicative of the significance of this figure. The word for wicked man here is שֹׁרֵר, which connotes a criminal.<sup>7</sup> The righteous man's way is marked by giving to the poor, a steadiness of trust and just dealings; his way leads to wealth, riches and blessings upon him and his descendants. In contrast, the criminal amounts to nothing. He can only react with anger at the righteous man's way. The word for anger is the same one prevalent in the grouping of texts on the fool, וְלֹא יִשְׁכָּח. It seems of a generalized, excited displeasure. Here the reaction of the criminal seems to be one of a frustration of wicked intentions. His anger is a sign of his defeat; he is consigned to failure.

Another passage dealing with the failure of a wicked person is in the context of a court setting.

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 957.

Proverbs 22:8 "He who sows injustice will reap calamity,  
and the rod of his fury (מִדֵּי אֵפוֹ) will fail." (RSV)

The word for fury, מִדֵּי אֵפוֹ, has a meaning of arrogance and overflowing anger.<sup>8</sup> The word for rod, מִדֵּי אֵפוֹ, means a staff, sceptre, and the expression, "sceptre of fury" denotes a position of power and will. Its failing is connected with injustice, מִדֵּי אֵפוֹ, a commonly used term meaning in some texts violent deed of injustice and here referring to general injustice.<sup>9</sup> The terms also carry a social context and meaning. The situation addressed by this wisdom saying is that of a person in authority or power who perpetuates injustice and abuses his position. His anger and his force will come to nought.

In line with traditions in this set of passages are certain narrative accounts. II Chronicles 16 contains the story of Asa the king and Hanani the seer. In reaction to Hanani's oracle of judgment from Yahweh, Asa becomes angry (אֵפוֹ), and has Hanani thrown into the stocks because of the king's raging (אֵפוֹ). Asa's anger is a reaction to the frustration of being denounced by the seer and of being accused of not relying on Yahweh in forming military alliances and of doing "foolishly." The writer adds that Asa at that time inflicted cruelties upon the people of Israel, an indication his doing injustice. Asa's fate is to contract three years later a fatal disease. Because a disease is often considered a form of judgment for transgression, the account depicts Asa's sealing his own doom by his anger and resulting action against Hanani the seer.

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 720.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., 732.

In another account found in II Chronicles 26, the king, Uzziah rages (אֵץ) after the priests refuse him the right to burn incense in the temple, an act considered a cultic transgression. The intent of the passage is to relate the judgment of Uzziah, a man who "when he was strong, he grew proud to his destruction"(verse 16). Unlike Asa, king Uzziah is stricken immediately after becoming angry. Foiled in his overstepping ambitions, he is punished with the dreaded disease of leprosy. In this passage the anger of the king is related to his wickedness and the outcome is judgment. However, it must be noted that here it is not the anger as such that is being punished; rather, it is the transgression against the priestly cult. The anger is a sign of the king's failing and may remind the reader of Psalm 112 where the wicked gnashes his teeth when thwarted.

In this set of passages, the mention of anger is in reference to wickedness and injustice. The righteous are to refrain from anger; the wicked become angry; the unjust will fail with their anger. Anger is connected with a person's trusting in Yahweh: one is to forsake it. Its appearance is seen in criminals who oppose the righteous, or in unjust kings who oppose seers or priests. The anger here seems to be the nature of a frustration, suggesting the cultic admonition not to be angry. The nature of anger seems to be the reaction of those opposed to Yahweh and to justice. Anger, therefore, in this set of passages acquires a negative connotation and is something to be avoided.

### Anger of the King

The king of a province had great power, and as such, he was the

subject of interest. Attention was paid to his whims and emotions, his desires and his feelings, particularly that of wrath. He was in absolute control over his subjects and his favor or disfavor could mean the difference between life and death, fortune or ruin, position or ostracism. Naturally, to those in the court, knowledge of the king's moods was essential. Subjects, as well as those to the king, were to be circumspect. The king's fury could be an awesome thing.

Proverbs 19:12 "A king's wrath(הַצַּדִּיק) is like the growling of a lion, but his favor is like dew upon the grass." (RSV)

Proverbs 20:2 "The wrath (implied) of a king is like the growling of a lion; he who provokes him to anger(וְהַמְּלִיךְ יִצְרֶה) forfeits his life." (RSV)

The hearer of these wisdom nuggets is warned of the king's fury as being no light matter.

Because the king's anger was always a potential court reality, sayings of wisdom were passed along from one generation to another.

Proverbs 14:35 "A servant who deals wisely has the king's favor but his wrath(וְהַמְּלִיךְ יִצְרֶה) falls on one who acts shamefully." (RSV)

Ecclesiastes 10:4 "If the anger(וְהַמְּלִיךְ יִצְרֶה) of the ruler rises against you, do not leave your place for deference will make amends for great offenses." (RSV)

Proverbs 16:14 "A king's wrath(וְהַמְּלִיךְ יִצְרֶה) is a messenger of death, and a wise man will appease it." (RSV)

Proverbs 21:14 "A gift in secret averts anger(וְהַמְּלִיךְ יִצְרֶה) and a bribe in the bosom, strong wrath(וְהַמְּלִיךְ יִצְרֶה)." (RSV)

Having the savvy of handling oneself with the king (particularly if he is irate) is important. Such learning of wisdom can be a matter of life and death. It is the wise man(וְהַמְּלִיךְ יִצְרֶה) who is able to turn back anger,

even the king's. This view agrees with the earlier discovery in the collection of texts concerning the fool that the wise turn away anger. This set of passages concerning the king's wrath provides insights as to why the fool is said to bring about his own destruction.

The advice given in the last subset of verses is that of caution and prudence. If the king is angry, one's responding attitude is to be deference and not rebellion. Submission is emphasized. Current attitudes of standing up against authority and of asserting one's own position makes little sense in this context: the king's power was absolute. Because his fury could be a fiercesome affair, one did well to survive it. Buckling under in a show of deference or avoiding the fury through discreet moves was practical advice. The king's anger is portrayed as being potentially destructive. One is not to react to it in anger; in fact, one's life might depend upon how well one was able to "swallow" one's own heated feelings.

The narrative literature contains many instances of regal fury. Usually the consequences are severe for those with whom the ruler's wrath is directed. For example, the baker and butler wind up in prison after incurring Pharaoh's anger (𐤀𐤃𐤏𐤍 -- Genesis 40:2, 41:10). The word used to describe the ruler's reaction after their offending him means to "be wroth" and implies a high pitch of fury.<sup>10</sup> Likewise Joseph in the same narrative is cast into prison after offending Potiphar, a high official. He is angered (𐤀𐤃𐤏𐤍 𐤏𐤍𐤏𐤍, literally "kindled his anger," Genesis 39:19) with Joseph after hearing his wife falsely accusing Joseph of at-

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<sup>10</sup>Ibid., 893.

tempted seduction. Joseph's fate for this believed transgression and breach of Potiphar's trust is a stint in prison, where he stays until he later interprets a dream of Pharaoh and so reverses his fortune. Yet another example of the fear of the ruler's wrath comes in the same narrative but with Joseph himself holding the power. Before him are his brothers who had sold him into slavery many years earlier, and now are in trouble with the Egyptian authorities (they were framed by Joseph himself). Not realizing he is their brother but thinking him to be a friendly high official, Judah pleads: "O my lord, let your servant, I pray you, speak a word in my lord's ears, and let not your anger (עֲנֵךְ יְיָ) burn against your servant; for you are like Pharaoh himself." (Genesis 44:18, RSV) Judah is entreating a high official's favor in the disadvantageous position of having a brother seized and his clan wanting in a time of famine. To incur wrath from this official, his brother incognito, would invite family tragedy and possibly death.

The Esther account provides another example of the power of the king's temper. Queen Vashti's refusal to appear at the king's party upon his bidding brings forth his rage (וַיִּחַר אֲפִיקִי, Esther 1:10-12). Her action is a personal affront and a wifely flouting of his authority. What results is a decree issued throughout the land for all women to honor their husbands. As for the queen, she is demoted and to be replaced by a virgin selected from the kingdom. With the king's action, his temper subsides (וַיִּשְׁכַּח). When two eunuchs guarding the bridal threshold become angry (וַיִּחַר אֲפִיקִי) against the king and plotted against him, they are, upon disclosure of their intentions, hanged. In both incidents persons high or close to the king suffered a reversal of fortune upon



incurring his wrath. While the queen lost her standing, the eunuchs lost their lives.

The fury of King Ahasuerus appears later in the high-point of the Esther story. When Esther, the queen, denounces her enemy Haman to the king by accusing him of being a wicked foe, the king reacts by rising and walking away in fury (וַיָּסֶף). Haman knows what this means and is terrified. He humbles himself before Esther whom he previously hated, begging for his life. But his frantic pleading is to no avail. The returning King Ahasuerus sees Haman grovelling, which in his anger, he perceives as an attack upon the queen. He has Haman then hanged. Upon the execution, the king's rage abates (וַיִּשְׁכַּח).

A shrewd handling of a king's anger is related in the account of II Samuel 11:14-21. Receiving a note from King David, the general Joab is to contrive a situation on the battleground that will result in the death of Uriah, the husband of Bathsheba, with whom King David has fathered a child in an adulterous affair. When Joab launches another day's battle against the Ammonites besieged in the city of Rabbah, he apparently makes a tactical error of having his troops come too closely to the walls. High casualties result. Realizing that the king will be angry with his military error, Joab is cunning in his bearing. He instructs the messenger to first tell David of the day's events, followed, when David reacts, with the news that Uriah was one of the day's fatalities. And Joab is correct in his calculating that the king's anger in this case will be outweighed by the relief of one man's death. Having dealt shrewdly, Joab avoids the king's displeasure. Instead of anger, the general receives a note instructing him to attack again. There is

no reprimand nor punishment.

Finally, I Kings 20 and 21 presents an interesting case of a king's impotent anger. After hearing a prophet's delivery of judgment from Yahweh, King Ahab reacts by going home, feeling "resentful" and sullen (רָצַח, רָצַח). This is followed by Naboth's refusal to relinquish his vineyard to his king's bidding. The king reacts in what could well be described as a manner characteristic of depression. He is vexed (רָצַח) and sullen (רָצַח); he lies down on his bed, turns his face away and will eat no food. His expression of anger is an indication of his impotence. He is unable to become angry in the furious fashion that might be expected of a king. His bottled-up, internalized anger bespeaks his weak position.

In conclusion, this collection of passages deals with a specific type of anger, that of the king. His anger is revealed to be fierce and hazardous for those incurring it. The king's fury is to be avoided as it is destructive, and if encountered, it is to be submitted to. Caution, prudence, circumspection and wisdom are advocated. What is not advocated is a direct confrontation with the king's rage.

#### Hot-Tempered and Quick-Tempered Man

While anger itself is not a topic of systematic study by the writers of the wisdom literature, there are several passages that deal with persons having fiery emotions. Specifically dealt with is the hot-headed person, the man of quick temper.

The man of anger is not dealt with favorably, for he is a source of trouble and disturbance. He is a person to be avoided.

Proverbs 22:24-5 "Make no friend with a man given to anger(אִתָּן)  
nor go with a wrathful man(אִתָּן)  
Lest you learn his ways  
and entangle yourself in a snare." (RSV)

Proverbs 19:19 "A man of great wrath will pay the penalty;(אִתָּן לְעָוֹן)  
for if you deliver him, you will only have to do it  
again." (RSV)

The man of great anger presents difficulties. His anger seems chronic and excessive and it redounds upon his head. This person is not to be associated with, because his responses and bad habits can be learned. He is considered a trap for which there is little hope.

The hot-tempered man is someone to be eschewed. Not only is his own life one of trouble, but he creates disturbances wherever he goes.

Proverbs 29:22 "A man of wrath(אִתָּן לְעָוֹן) stirs up strife  
and a man given to anger(אִתָּן לְעָוֹן) causes much  
transgression." (RSV)

Proverbs 15:18 "The man of anger(אִתָּן לְעָוֹן) stirs strife,  
the one slow to anger(אִתָּן לְעָוֹן) quiets conten-  
tion." (RSV)

Proverbs 21:19 "It is better to live in a desert land  
than with a contentious and fretful(אִתָּן לְעָוֹן)woman."  
(RSV)

Such a personality trait causes much problems. The word used for transgression, אִתָּן, connotes a serious sin, while the term אִתָּן means strife and contention.<sup>11</sup> The word אִתָּן has the understanding of trouble and quarrelling.<sup>12</sup> This is what results from such a person! One suspects from these passages that men of wrath have caused great harm in relationships and much disruption in social settings. The basis for the sayings is undoubtedly observations by many persons of such people and

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., 193.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., 937.

the disturbances they cause with their excessive and chronic anger. This association of expression of anger and resulting consequence seems a causal relationship.

Not only is the anger of the hot-tempered man chronic and excessive, but it is explosive as well. What is to be eschewed is a heedless fiery show of anger which upsets persons and results in return anger.

The hot-tempered man was observed to be a problem in at least one other culture. Many of the Egyptian passages preserved in the writings of Amenomope (sometime between 1000- 600 B.C.)<sup>13</sup> bear a striking resemblance to the Hebrew proverbs:

As for the hot-headed man in the temple,  
He is like the tree growing in an enclosed space.  
A moment completeth its loss of foliage.  
Its end is sunk far from its place;  
The flame is its burial shroud.  
The truly silent man, he withdraweth himself apart.  
He is like a tree growing in a plot.  
It groweth green and doubleth its yield;  
It is before its lord.  
Its fruit is sweet; its shade is pleasant.  
Its end is reached in the grove.<sup>14</sup>

#### Ninth Chapter:

Associate not with the hot-head,  
Nor become intimate with him in conversation....  
Leap not to cleave to such a one,  
Lest a terror carry thee off.<sup>15</sup>

#### Tenth Chapter:

Salute not thy hot-headed (opponent) perforce,  
And hurt thine own heart (thereby)  
Say not to him: 'Hail to thee!' falsely,  
While there is dread in thy belly.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>D. Winton Thomas, Documents from Old Testament Times (New York: Harper & Row, 1961), 173.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., 178.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., 180.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., 181.

The first excerpt from the Egyptian wisdom lore is a familiar antithesis between the hot-headed (in Egyptian, "man of heat"<sup>17</sup>) and the quiet man. The hot-tempered man is not viewed favorably. In the following passage which is similar to Proverbs 22:24-25, the listener is told not to associate with such a person. Yet other evaluations of the hot-headed one and anger in general are conveyed by other Egyptian passages:

Second Chapter, VI:

The fiery, hot-headed man-- what is he like to thee?  
He shrieks imprecations, his voice soars upwards into the heights  
of heaven,  
The god Aahu (i.e., the Moon-god) stands still in his course, and  
holds him to be an abomination.<sup>18</sup>

Third Chapter, VIII:

A raging wind he rushes forth like a destroying fire among the  
reeds.  
The noisy, hot-headed man in his hour (i.e. when his rage is greatest),  
Turn thyself aside from before him, leave the matter of him  
To the God [Who] knows how to requite him.<sup>19</sup>

Twelfth Chapter, LV:

Make no undertaking (?) in company with the noisy, hot-headed man,  
[or] thou wilt be making thyself a friend of a man of moral obliquity.<sup>20</sup>

Twenty-Second Chapter, XCIII:

[If] thou are heated (i.e., losest thy temper) thy end comes.<sup>21</sup>

The Egyptians view the man of anger also unfavorably. This man will be requited from God; he is an abomination to the Moon-god; he is an abomination. In the pitch of his fury he is to be avoided. He is not the type to make friends with. Anger itself leads to personal destruction.

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<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 180.

<sup>18</sup>Wallis Budge, The Teaching of Amen-em-apt, Son of Kanekht, (London: Hopkinson, 1924), 146.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., 147.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., 161.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., 172.

It can be concluded that the hot-tempered man was observed in more than one culture. The Egyptian texts may have been actually borrowed by the Hebrew writers,<sup>22</sup> implying that the observations concerning the hot-headed have a general truth. The wisdom sayings, general observations, address problems of human existence that recur despite time or place. The passages thus acquire a universal perspective. Anger expressed in the manner of the hot-head causes problems; fiery flashes of temper, particularly if repeated regularly, create ill-will. Chronically angry persons have a way of stirring up trouble in social relationships. Thus the wisdom writers eschew this personality trait. Anger in this form is seen to be destructive, dividing and hence something to be avoided.

(b) Quick-tempered man.

Just as the man of anger is viewed unfavorably, so is the person who is quick to anger. Such is considered a fool:

Proverbs 14:17 "A man of quick temper (אִישׁ חָזָק) acts foolishly (אִישׁ חָזָק)  
but a man of discretion is patient (or hated)." (RSV)

Proverbs 14:29 "He who is slow to anger (אִישׁ רַחֵם) has great understanding,  
but he who has a hasty temper (אִישׁ חָזָק) exalts folly (אִישׁ חָזָק)." (RSV)

Proverbs 19:11 "Good sense makes a man slow to anger (אִישׁ רַחֵם) and it is his glory to overlook an offense (אִישׁ רַחֵם)." (RSV)

The term for fool is one of the two used in the collection of passages previously investigated. Likewise, the antithesis employs standard

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<sup>22</sup>Thomas, 174.

words of the wisdom tradition. To the fool is attributed the characteristic of a quick temper, while to the man of prudence is attributed a slowness to anger. The likelihood is strong that the wisdom writers would have seen a causal relationship here. Prudence makes a man slow to anger; foolishness leads a person to quickness of ire. The discerning person is "cool-headed," having social grace and listening to what others have to say. One rash to temper is not as inclined to listen before blowing his top.

The wisdom writers advocate a calm head and a hesitancy to anger:

Proverbs 16:32 "He who is slow to anger(  $\text{D}^{\text{7}}\text{Q}^{\text{1}} \text{ } \text{7}^{\text{1}}\text{N}$ ) is better than the mighty,  
and he who rules his spirit(  $\text{7}^{\text{1}}\text{7}^{\text{1}}\text{7}$ ) than he who takes a city." (RSV)

Proverbs 25:28 "A man without self-control is like a city broken into and left without walls." (RSV)

Restraint is urged. The writers acknowledge the difficulty of the task, as well as its glory when it is accomplished. Even conquerors of a city cannot claim an equal feat! In contrast, the man who cannot restrain his emotions is like a ransacked city having no protection. The use of military language in both passages emphasizes the aspect of control and discipline, as well as the seriousness of not being able to hold oneself in check.

Of the passages on wrath, there are few as compact and trenchant as the following observations:

Proverbs 15:1 "A soft answer turns away wrath(  $\text{7}^{\text{1}}\text{7}^{\text{1}}\text{7}$ ),  
harsh(  $\text{7}^{\text{1}}\text{7}^{\text{1}}\text{7}$ ) words stirs up anger(  $\text{7}^{\text{1}}\text{7}^{\text{1}}\text{7}$ )." (RSV)

Proverbs 30:33 "For pressing milk produces curds,  
pressing the nose produces blood,

and pressing anger(אִתְּנָה) produces strife(לִיָּהוּ)."(RSV)

The word,לִיָּהוּ, "turn away," is the same one that is used in Proverbs 29:8, which states that wise men turn away wrath. One of the words for anger,אִתְּנָה, is also employed in Proverbs 29:8. The commonality of word usage between the two wisdom sayings may indicate a commonality of tradition. The wise man is thus the one to use soft words in situations of anger.

The passage in Proverbs 15:1 is expressed generally. The situation presupposed and addressed is one of an angry person confronting another person. The proverb is in observation form which may be the result of repeated experience with angry situations. It was noted that answering anger with anger only begets ire. Harsh replies only fans the flames of fury. Similarly, Proverbs 30:33 notes the results of pushing anger: it leads to strife. On the other hand, it was observed that soft words has a dampening effect upon the emotion. Conciliatory words serve to cool flaring tempers enough to permit persons to listen to one another.

Proverbs 15:1 epitomizes wisdom's contribution for dealing with anger. Slowness to anger expedites the affairs of everyday living. Communication is enhanced by such control. Rational discussion is made possible. All too frequent are times of a person's losing his temper before hearing and understanding another, writing that person off, dismissing them or raging against them. Such a quickness to anger implies an insult and non-acceptance of the other person. The fabric of humans living together is undercut by an unwillingness to treat others as human by such quickness. What might be casually termed immaturity is actually



a destructive double-edged sword which cuts off not only the attacked, but the angered as well.

A few narrative passages pertain to the hot-head and fast-tempered. In the book of Judges, Samson, having had his riddle answered by the Philistines through the cunning of his wife Delilah, goes down to Ashkelon and kills thirty of them. The text says that "the spirit(רוח) of Yahweh came down upon him" after he had lost his wager to his foes; however, his actions suggest a human rage impelled less from Yahweh's judgment than from his own pique. After he slays the thirty, the text says in verse 19c of chapter 14 that "his anger(אֵת) burned(בָּעַר)", and he went to the house of his father." Samson's hot-headedness led him to murder the Philistines. Their natural reaction was to avenge themselves. Samson's hot-temper is an indication of his wasted mission as a Nazirite, God's devotee.

Yet another incident of rising tempers is found in II Samuel 19:41-43 where there is a dispute between the men of Judah and the men of Israel over King David. After being accused of stealing the king and his troops from Israel, the army of Judah replies that David is of kin to them and asks why they are angry(לָמָּה זֶה)? There ensues counter-charges and increased ire. Instead of listening to one another, they hurl charges at one another in the angry dispute. The scene is a charged one with escalating rage and with no conciliation.

The subset of passages concerning the quick-tempered person proclaims an unfavorable judgment on this trait. Being quick to temper is linked with the tradition of the fool. What is admonished are restraint, self-control, and slowness to anger. This is a trait of the

wise. Soft words are revealed to be the proper manner of responding to anger.

In conclusion for the entire collection of texts, the man of anger is to be avoided; the quick-tempered is considered to be a fool. The expression of anger is very important. Neither the fast to anger, nor the person with chronic, excessive and explosive anger are approved. Slowness to anger is the favored course of action. The wise and prudent man has a coolness of spirit, control over his emotions and exercises restraint. Anger in connection with the hot-tempered and quick-tempered is not considered a constructive force. In fact, anger is revealed to be destructive and divisive in the context of human relationships. Anger is to be avoided; a cautious and sophisticated handling of the rage is urged. Anger is an emotion to be quieted through conciliatory words, not harsh ones.

#### Descriptive Usage of Anger

The Old Testament contains numerous narrative references to anger. In the historical, legendary or story accounts are many scenes involving persons and places. In the context of the story, anger appears and affords an opportunity for culling out clues concerning the understanding of human anger. Whereas the references in the wisdom literature are of a general nature, those in the narrative literature are specific. The details of the story reveal the nuances and sources of anger. Though the stories may be legendary or even spun for a theological purpose (such as the story of Jonah), are described and not summarized in terms of observations and imperatives. The narrative passages

present an important source of "data" for this study. The different thrust of the literature should yield a different perspective.

Unapproved or Inappropriate Anger. Many of the narrative passages depict anger as leading to destruction or as happening in a manner not seemingly appropriate to the situation. Several passages imply anger's potential for destruction and evil. One such reference is contained in a warning of the Danites to Micah in Judges 18:25: "Do not raise your voice among us lest men of bitter spirit (אֲנָשִׁים בָּרִירִים) meet you and you lose your life and the life of your house(family)." The term, "bitter of spirit" can be construed as anger language because of the depth of emotion and particularly because of its possible retaliatory nature. Bitterness represents a more diffuse, generalized form of unresolved anger arising from some root of displeasure; indeed, the degree of rage and ill feelings is denoted by the term. The directive to Micah is tantamount to a threat: he had better keep his mouth shut or lose his life. His raising objections to the pillage of his goods might spark ugliness of action. Yet another reference of the evilness of anger surfaces in Judges 9:23a: "And Elohim sent an evil spirit (רוּחַ רָע) between the house of Abimelech and the house of Shechem" all for the purpose, the writer goes on to say, to initiate revenge for previous murders. The enmity described is of an evil nature and interestingly enough, is attributed to proceed from Elohim (God), a reflection of dynamic thinking.

Anger can endure. This is evidenced in the early Jacob story. After defrauding his brother Esau, Jacob is told by his mother (who

assisted him in the fraud) that she has learned of Esau's resulting anger and thus advises him: "Now therefore, my son, obey my voice; arise, flee to Laban my brother in Haran, and stay with him a while, until your brother's fury ( $\text{אֵת אֵת}$ ) turns away; until your brother's anger ( $\text{אֵת אֵת}$ ) turns away, and he forgets what you have done to him; then I will send and fetch you from there." (RSV) In the context of the story, Rebekah's warning is quite appropriate. In verse 41 of Genesis 27, Esau is so enraged that he says that after the mourning for his deceased father has passed that he will kill Jacob. Esau's anger and hatred seems in proportion with the degree of the wrong that is perpetrated upon him by his mother and brother. Rebekah's advice to Jacob suggests the view that anger is something that will turn away and be abated through time. But Rebekah vastly underestimates the degree of Esau's fury: it is not a passing rage which peaks like a storm and then subsides to pass away. The situation is far more serious than might be remedied by catharsis, for the wrong of the swindle has yet to be rectified. It is fourteen years before Jacob dares to return, and even then he fears for his life. The dramatic point of the story comes with the forgiveness by Esau of his brother, welcoming Jacob from his prolonged absence. Esau has reconciled his own hate and broken the destructive thrust of his rage by overturning the momentum by forgiveness. Thus from this story can be gleaned the conclusions that wrath is a serious matter which, if deeply felt, can engender hate, nurture desires for murder and entrench itself in the person. It does not go away easily, but must and can be resolved by forgiveness.

A case of an anger not subsiding is found in the story of David

and Saul. Because of David's increasing popularity, King Saul keeps a wary eye on the lad. David soon finds himself out of favor with the king and fearing for his life. Unsure about his standing, David in I Samuel 20:7 asks his friend Jonathan who is also son of the king, to signal him after a test question: "If he (Saul) says, 'Good!' it will be well for your servant (David): but if he is angry (אֵין־טוֹב לְךָ), then know that evil is determined (אֵין־טוֹב לְךָ) by him." The term for angry is a double construction of verb and noun which emphasizes the degree of emotion. The explicit show of anger will be a sign for David of Saul's mood and intentions. In this passage and context, anger is a tip-off for evil intentions.

Saul's anger is one of jealousy. In I Samuel 18:8 he is angry (אֵין־טוֹב לְךָ), being displeased after hearing the crowds cheer, "Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands." (vs. 7) Later in I Samuel 20:30 he loses his temper in a manner completely out of proportion to the situation. When Jonathan asks his father the test question planted by David, Saul reacts in a fury (אֵין־טוֹב לְךָ), calling his son derogatory epithets with insidious accusations of causing shame to the family. Jonathan, who is responding to the immediate situation asks his father the logical and natural question of what David has done wrong? But Saul cannot even respond rationally; instead, he picks up a spear and hurls it at his own son. Saul's temper is an indication of the extent jealousy possesses him. His rage is so deep that he cannot respond to the immediate situation but instead is driven to lash out against the general situation of feeling David to be a threat to his kingship. Non-rational violence appears after a simple question.

The fury of jealousy was noted by the wisdom writers:

Proverbs 6:34 "For jealousy makes a man furious (אֵין מִן הַחַיִּים) and he will not spare when he takes revenge." (RSV)

Proverbs 27:4 "Wrath (אֵין) is cruel, anger (אֵין) is overwhelming, but who can stand before jealousy?" (RSV)

Though the first proverb is stated in the context of adultery, it indicates the rage of jealousy and suggests that jealousy is a source of anger. The treat of losing a valuable possession relating to one's station or security provokes great rage. The second saying underscores this idea and intimates that jealousy is one of the severest forms of anger. In the case of David and Saul, this observation proved to be true. There was never a satisfactory resolution through reconciliation or even toleration. Throughout the rest of his life, Saul tries to track David down to eliminate him. Only when Saul dies a broken and defeated man at the hands of his enemies, the Philistines, is the fury resolved: one of the participants has died. Not all incidents of anger can be dealt with expeditiously through a rational, common sense manner. Some forms of anger run deeper. Some are not to be resolved short of destruction.

Saul's fierce rage affects the members of his family, particularly Jonathan. After his father's explosive display, Jonathan leaves the room in fierce anger (אֵין מִן הַחַיִּים), feeling humiliated at his father's irrational behavior. So angry is he that he does not eat anything more that day, as he feels great shame for his father and worry for his friend David. In this passage, the feeling of humiliation carries with it anger. Shame and anger are portrayed as being closely related here.

Saul's jealousy is not the only one evoked by David's talents

and daring. His eldest brother, Eliab, becomes hot when he hears David's interest in challenging the Philistine giant, Goliath. Eliab rebukes the young lad, whom he thinks should be home tending the sheep. With Eliab's heated upbraiding come general accusations as to the intentions of David. His younger brother's reply to the heated assault of words is to ask the logical question of what he had done wrong, followed by a glib remark of equivocation. This angry exchange is not reconciled, but instead is not discussed further by David's walking away and pursuing his original interests concerning Goliath.

There are other forms of inappropriate anger besides that of jealousy. Sometimes it is of a wicked nature such as found with kings. For example, the princes in Jeremiah 37:15 become enraged (חֲרִיבִים) with the prophet, beat him and cast him into prison during the time of siege by the Chaldeans. Jeremiah, who had previously received an oracle of judgment from Yahweh announcing the approaching victory of the enemy, is stopped at a gate and accused of defecting to the enemy. Considered a trouble-maker, Jeremiah is imprisoned on flimsy grounds. The princes' disgruntlement with him erupts into anger and the incident allows them the excuse to exercise their wrath by jailing him. Similarly, Sanballat in the book of Nehemiah (4:1) as the province governor becomes angry (חֲרִיבִים) at news of the Jew rebuilding the wall to Jerusalem. He is unsuccessful, however, in his attempts to stop them from re-establishing the city. The anger is an indication of his opposition to and his being an enemy of the persons returning from the Exile.

Anger may appear in struggles for power and is associated with hatred and enmity. Such is the case with the account in the book of

Esther when Haman, a high court official, becomes very angry (אֵדִי) when his mortal enemy, Mordecai, does not bow down to him. Haman does not express his fury openly but conceals it so that he can return home to plot against the Jews. He is raised again to fury (אֵדִי) by Mordecai who does not pay regard or fear the high official. Again Haman slyly hides any show of emotion so that he can conspire against the Jew's life; his anger is concealed for purposes of political advantage. Haman's rage which prompts him to seek Mordecai's life is not reconciled but is ended with the official's hanging. His hate leads to his own demise; it is a destructive, insecure rage.

A tale involving clearly inappropriate anger is found in Jonah. After delivering the call for repentance, Jonah is displeased to see the denizens of Ninevah not punished by Yahweh when they do indeed repent of their wickedness. Jonah is angry (אֵדִי). In the story Yahweh asks Jonah, "Do you do well to be angry?" (אֵדִי) The appropriateness of Jonah's anger is questioned by Yahweh. Why should Jonah become angry? He has done his mission; indeed, the people of Ninevah have listened and repented, as all has thurned out well. Jonah's anger is one of resentment and dissatisfaction from there being no punishment. In fact, Jonah is angry enough to become depressed and start feeling sorry for himself. He even asks Yahweh that he might die. The cause for rejoicing for Ninevah is then demonstrated to Jonah through the growing of a plant which protects him from the sun. When it dies, he feels despondent again. Elohim asks him again if he does well to be angry (אֵדִי) to which he responds: "I do well to be angry (אֵדִי), enough to die." Yahweh's response is that Jonah pities the plant but not the people of Ninevah.



Jonah's anger is clearly not an appropriate one, for the situation does not warrant it nor has he been harmed. Most likely his anger is like that arising from past resentments and prejudices, an anger which touches off his depression. The rage is turned inwards and leads to a wish for death. Not only is the anger out of place, but it has a destructive bent to it. However, the second incident of ire after the plant's death indicates care upon his part. The first anger is not connected with care, and that is Yahweh's point.

Though Jonah made himself the object of his anger by turning it inward, the real target for his wrath is Yahweh. It is, after all, Yahweh who makes him go on the mission to Ninevah, and it is Yahweh who then does not rain down judgment upon them. There are other cases of persons becoming angry with Yahweh. One of them is Cain in the book of Genesis 4:5-7, only Yahweh does not appear so spotless in this account. After Abel's offering of sheep is accepted and Cain's gift of crops is not by Yahweh, Cain is angry (עָרַב). This seems natural enough, for there appears no explicit reason in the writings for the rejection. As in the Jonah account (the Genesis narration was written centuries earlier), Yahweh asks Cain why is he angry? (לָמָּה עָרַב) If he does well, Yahweh goes on to tell him, he will be accepted, and if not, then sin is crouching at the door. The sense of the passage seems to be that Cain's ire is not justified. Nevertheless, in this narration Cain appears not to have a chance and Yahweh's decision seems, at least from an observer's point of view, arbitrary.

Job is another who becomes angry with God, something from the context which is not what one is supposed to do. Despairing and not

comprehending why so much suffering has suddenly befallen him, Job becomes angry with God and wonders why the wicked are allowed to prosper and he, a righteous man, is stricken with sorrow. Eliphaz the Temanite in Chapter 15:12-12 reacts by confronting him: "Why does your heart carry you away, and why do your eyes flash, that you turn your spirit (עִתִּי) against God, and let such words go out of your mouth?" (RSV) According to the prevailing understanding, Job is wrong to be angry with and to assault God. If one comes into suffering, the accepted tradition was, then it is the result of sin. But Job knows better, for he is blameless and yet trouble besets him. Later in the debate one of the three debating with Job becomes angry (... עִתִּי עִתִּי) with Job because he justifies himself rather than God. Elihu also becomes angry with the others (... עִתִּי עִתִּי), who though declaring Job wrong cannot adduce the reasons to justify their judgment. Elihu's anger seems to be in reaction to Job's seeming obstinacy and to Elihu's colleagues' ineffectual arguing. Elihu is frustrated and reacts from ideological reason, for Job is challenging his understanding of reality. Elihu's vituperative reactions are like those of a man threatened in his belief, for one who is secure has no reason for anger upon disagreement. At the end of the book it is disclosed that the anger of Job's antagonists is not justified. Yahweh reproves them for their words against Job, because they have spoken incorrectly. (42:7)

A situation of a man flying into a rage at a man of God is narrated in II Kings 5, the story of Naaman and Elisha. Contracting leprosy, Naaman the commander of the Syrian army, travels to the Israelis for help, where Elisha the prophet promises to cure him. When a messenger

from the prophet instructs Naaman to dip seven times in the Jordan River, the diseased man becomes enraged (אֵף בְּעָרְוֹ), for he expects more. Mocking the instructions, Naaman turns away in a fury (אֵף מְאֹד). However, an alert and cool-headed servant reasons with Naaman so that his anger abates and he follows the prophet's directives to become well again. Though Naaman's anger is situational, it is also inappropriate, because he becomes incensed due to the orders for cure not meeting his expectations.

Finally, miscellaneous passages involving inappropriate anger are found in Numbers 24:10 when Balak becomes angry (אֵף בְּלִבִּי) with Balaam after delivering an oracle of Elohim praising Israel. So incensed is Balak that he strikes his hands together and tells Balaam to flee. Balak's anger is an indication of this frustration and of his defeat. He does not want to hear Balaam speak of Israel's glory. Yet another passage is found in Genesis 45:24 when Joseph tells his brothers after revealing his identity to them, to go back and "Do not quarrel on the way (לֹא תִקְדַּח בְּדֶרֶךְ)." There are yet other miscellaneous passages which speak or hint of anger's destructiveness. One is an excerpt from Jacob's oracle, found in Genesis 49: 5-7.

"Simeon and Levi are brothers;  
weapons of violence are their swords.  
O my soul, come not into their council;  
O my spirit, be not joined to their company;  
for in their anger (אֵף) they slay men,  
and in their wantonness they hamstring oxen.  
Cursed be their anger (אֵף), for it is fierce;  
and their wrath (אֵף), for it is cruel!  
I will divide them in Jacob  
and scatter them in Israel. (RSV)

In summary, the narrative texts mention anger in various ways.

It is seen to have a potential destructive nature; it can engender hate and fan desires for murder. Some forms of anger, seen in the cases of Saul and Haman, are not to be resolved amicably. As in the case of Esau, anger can be so deep that it endures for a very long time; some angers do not abate easily. In the case of Jonah, the anger can be internally directed and related to resentments. Our study revealed that the sources of anger can be jealousy (relating to one's security), thwarted quest for power, fraud, unrealistic expectations (such as with Naaman), resentments (such as with Jonah), humiliation (as with Jonathan) and great displeasure. Serendipitous findings in this examination into passages of inappropriate anger included the revelation that forgiveness can overturn anger's momentum (Esau, Joseph), as well as a dianoetic approach which sometimes proves successful (Naaman).

Neutral or Constructive Anger. Occasionally a term for anger will appear as part of a speech of one person in the narration to another. For example in Genesis 31:35 Rachel entreats her father Laban not to be angry (וְלֹא יִחַר) if she does not rise from her saddle on a camel, for she claims to be in menstruation. On the surface she is asking her father to understand her situation and so not to get angry at would otherwise seem a breach of propriety. What is actually transpiring is her concealing stolen objects by sitting on them. The reference to anger in this passage is one arising naturally in the conversation. Anger itself is considered neither good nor bad. It is accepted as a natural factor in life.

Anger may appear when one is accused falsely. After Laban can-

not find the idols that his daughter has stolen and hidden from him, Jacob reacts by burning hot. His response seems appropriate because he does not know that one of his wives has indeed pilfered Laban's prized possessions. To Jacob it appears as though Laban is harassing him, and he rebukes his father-in-law, demanding to be shown what wrong he has done. Laban's failure to turn up any indicting evidence puts him in a disadvantageous position. He becomes fair game for Jacob's subsequent listing of a series of resentments and accusations against Laban who has treated Jacob poorly over a course of time. By this time Laban senses his awkward position and offers to cut a covenant between them and thus reconcile their anger.

Another example of anger arising from a false accusation surfaces in II Samuel 3:8 when Ishbosheth accuses Abner of dallying around Saul's concubines, to which Abner becomes angry(  $\text{לִיָּאֵל}$  ). Apparently the accusation is a stupid one which leads Abner eventually to break forces with Saul's camp and form an alliance with David's band. In his anger Abner questions why he is being accused when he has been so trustworthy to date. The point of the story is to explain how Abner comes to be an ally of David. The indignation here is natural and appropriate and serves as a motivation for a change of the magnitude of switching allegiances.

There are a number of passages in which anger appears as a natural reaction to a variety of events. For example, in II Chronicles 25:10 the army becomes angry(  $\text{לִיָּאֵל}$  ), leaving in fierce fury(  $\text{בְּאַף}$  ) after being disbanded by King Amaziah. Their response is from a sudden letting down of spirits, but which results in no harm or reported re-

taliation. In another military situation (I Samuel 29:4), the Philistine lords become angry (אֲבִיזְרָא) with Achish for wanting to include David in their ranks. Their reaction is to a perceived stupidity. The Philistine lords remember all too well David's feats against them earlier to trust him now in their army. Yet another case of a natural eruption of anger occurs in Genesis 30:2 when Jacob loses his temper with Rachel's pleading for the conception of a child. Apparently he is being asked to do something that has thus far not proved possible; hence, he is extremely frustrated. Another term of anger is employed in a speech by Hannah in I Samuel 1:16 after suffering agony and distress from being unable to conceive, who asks Eli's understanding: "Do not regard your maidservant as a base woman, for all along I have been speaking out of my great anxiety and agitation (אֲנִי בְּאֵיזֶה אֲנִי)." (RSV) The use of anger in the preceding passages appears in a matter-of-fact fashion, arising under diverse situations: military considerations, political decisions, barrenness. Pervasive, anger appears in a variety of situations and fashions.

Indignation is seen as a response to unacceptable military action, an indignation which prompts action. When he hears the boastful, arrogant words of Gaal, Zebul (Judges 9:30) becomes angry. (אֲבִיזְרָא) His anger leads to Abimelech's being told which results in the eventual defeat of Gaal. Likewise in I Samuel 11:6 Saul's anger is kindled by the dire news of the siege of Jabesh (אֲבִיזְרָא). He is impelled to recruit enough men to deliver the surrounded city from the attacking Ammonites.

Towards Yahweh, tempers flare. King David is incensed (אֲבִיזְרָא)

with Yahweh when Uzzah, a servant, is killed by the ark of the covenant when Uzzah touches it while trying to stabilize it (II Samuel 6:8). David's anger quickly turns to fear, however, which may be an interesting noting of the closeness of the relation of fear and anger. In a different account (I Samuel 15:11), Samuel is incensed and cries all night when he hears that Yahweh repents of making Saul king (יָהוָה). In both cases the indignation is a reaction of great displeasure to a turn of events beyond their control. Though David and Samuel do not actively challenge Yahweh like Job, they do get angry, an event which is treated in a surprisingly neutral manner.

Outrage is a common source for anger. One of the less subtle examples occurs when the sons of Jacob learn of their sister's rape by Shechem, son of Hamor the Hivite. Their reaction (Genesis 34:7) to Dinah's humiliation is that of great anger (אֵין אֵין), great enough to motivate their dealing wilily with Hamor. When he is lulled, they slay him and his family in revenge. Unleashed by a horrid incident, their outrage leads to wholesale slaughter. The fierceness of their retaliation indicates not only the perceived magnitude of the offense but the roughness of life then. Another case of outrage involves King David in II Samuel 13:21 when he hears of the rape of his daughter Tamar by his son Amnon. Though David becomes incensed, he does nothing. (אֵין) Just as in the account of Dinah's rape a tragedy results from too much anger, so in this account is there a tragedy occurring from too little anger. While David does nothing, his son Absalom remembers but keeps quiet until after a two year period of anger festering into hatred, he kills Amnon in revenge. This eventually leads to a split in the royal house-

hold and to civil war pitting David against his own son Absalom. Absalom himself is later killed during combat. The story deals with David's ineffectual handling of a scandalous family affair, an ineptness leading to an unhealthy family situation in which violence flares. David's anger is impotent. He does nothing to rectify the matter; he merely feels angry. In this case, therein lies the tragedy.

One person who is portrayed as feeling a good deal of outrage is Moses, who becomes enraged (אֵץ פָּ) in Exodus 16:20 with the Hebrews in the wilderness who pay no heed to instructions from Yahweh and allow their manna to stay out over night. Their action is indicative of their general rebelliousness, and Moses' reaction is to their stupidity. In another scene (Exodus 32:19) Moses is very angry (אֵץ גָּדוֹל) to find, upon descending Mount Sinai where he received the Ten Commandments, that the people had constructed a golden calf to worship in his absence. Moses reacts by smashing the image with the tablets bearing the Decalogue. Moses' outrage is motivated by cultic considerations, as the people have been idolatrous and have failed to trust Yahweh. Yet another incident involving Moses' outrage involves an open rebellion. When Dathan, Abiram and their supporters refuse to gather with the others in front of Moses, he becomes incensed (אֵץ גָּדוֹל). Moses asks Yahweh not to accept their sacrifices, a request of retaliative nature. Not only does Yahweh not accept their sacrifices, but he consumes them as well. Moses' indignation to a situation of perversity, rebellion and transgression is vindicated by Yahweh.

Incidents of Moses' outrage abound. One involves the Hebrews' attack on the people of Midian. Instead of following Moses' instruc-



tions, they preserve the lives of the women. Moses is outraged with the army officers(<sup>אֲדָמָה</sup>). (Numbers 31:14) He orders them to kill every woman who is not a virgin, which they then do. Again unmet expectations of a cultic nature provoke Moses to wrath and to demand a rectification of the matter. Yet in another circumstance Moses experiences another anger which is placated. When he hears that Eleazar and Ithamar have eaten the sacrifice, he becomes enraged(<sup>אֵלֶּזָר וִּיתְמָר</sup>), but his temper is quickly cooled upon a reasonable explanation by them of their actions. Moses' ire is situational and with the passing of provocation, the emotion subsides.

Outrage can appear in the context of prophets. One prophet, Nathan, appears in the court during the time of King David's adulterous affair with Bathsheba. He poses a tale to David to gather the king's opinion. The story is of a rich man coming to a poor man with only one sheep. The wealthy, who has a flock, takes the pauper's lone possession. To this King David (II Samuel 12:5) becomes enraged(<sup>אֵלֶּזָר וִּיתְמָר</sup>) and condemns the rich man to death. Nathan's dramatic reply is that David himself is that man and Uriah, Bathsheba's husband, the man with the sole possession. Unwittingly David condemns himself in the prophetic demonstration. His anger is his own indictment, a judgment which Nathan hands from Yahweh. While in this case it is the accused who condemns himself by his own angry pronouncement, matters are different with Elisha in II Kings 13:19. The prophet Elisha instructs King Joash to pick up a bow and arrow. This represents the victory over the Syrians, says Elisha. Then the prophet directs the ruler to strike the ground with the arrows. This the king does, but stops with the third time. Elisha

then becomes enraged(<sup>וְהָרָג</sup>) and delivers his oracle of prophesy. Instead of striking the ground only three times, the king should have hit the earth five or six times. Therefore, the king will only strike the Syrians three times. Though he will rate victory, he will not accomplish the demolition of the enemy forces. Again the anger is used as the signal of the judgment. In Elisha's case, however, it is the prophet who becomes enraged.

Outrage can appear in personal, first-person form in the narrative and prophetic literature. Such is the case with Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Nehemiah.

Jeremiah 15:17:

I did not sit in the company of merry-makers, nor did I rejoice,  
I sat alone, because thy hand was upon me,  
for thou hadst filled me with indignation(<sup>וְהָרָג</sup>). (RSV)

Ezekiel 3:14

The Spirit lifted me up and took me away, and I went in bitterness in the heat of my spirit(<sup>וְהָרָג</sup>), the hand of the Lord being strong upon me. (RSV)

Jeremiah's statement is a part of a general lamentation concerning his sufferings as a prophet. It is interesting to note that his indignation is the result of Yahweh's filling him with it. The indignation, then, is of a prophetic nature and seems to represent Yahweh's indignation with Judah. The passage suggests that Jeremiah's anger keeps him separate from others and from frivolous activities. As a prophetic anger, it is hard to fit it into an anthropology, except as an example of the diverse forms and motivations that anger can have.

The case with Nehemiah is more tangible. He writes in the book of Nehemiah 5:6, "I was very angry(<sup>וְהָרָג</sup>) when I heard their outcry and these words." (RSV) Nehemiah's rage comes when he hears of injus-

tice in the land. The tax structure is so heavy that many persons have been forced into slavery. Nehemiah's feelings of wrath lead him to remedy matters by organizing the people to resist the local and unjust authorities. Nehemiah's anger is a constructive one in that it impels him to seek a change towards justice, and prompts him to a determined effort to secure Jerusalem again for the Jews.

Only a few miscellaneous passages stand between this exploration and the drawing of conclusions. The anger of Balaam in Numbers 22:27 (אֵלֶיךָ-נִחַם) is on one hand appropriate and on the other hand, inappropriate. While he is pinned by the ass which prompts his ire, he is angry because an angel of Yahweh stands in the way, an angel he fails to see. Later in the literature is a reference to anger involving animal language. In II Samuel, Hushai warns Absalom of David's anger, saying he is enraged as a bear robbed of her cubs (אֵלֶיךָ נִחַם אֶלֶיךָ נִחַם). Such anger is neither favored nor condemned; it simply is recognized as being the reality of the moment. Its naturalness and fierceness is underscored by the animal language. Even the animals become "angry."

The final miscellaneous passage is found in the Joseph story. At the dramatic highlight of the narrative, Joseph reveals himself to his astonished brothers as the one whom they sold into slavery several years earlier. He tells them (Genesis 45:5): "And do not be distressed or angry( נִחַם) with yourselves, because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life." (RSV) By telling them not to be angry with themselves, he is tacitly admitting that this would be the normal and expected reaction on their part in such a situation. Their horrendous deed of the past would be expected to redound as evil upon their

heads. They have every reason to be angry with themselves. The theological message in this passage becomes clear: Elohim has turned evil deeds around for good. The destructive momentum of past hatred is overturned by Elohim. Like Esau his uncle, Joseph brings reconciliation through forgiveness. There is to be no more anger.

In this subsection of anger used in a descriptive sense an exploration through the narrative passages has led to finding that anger can be in response to an immediate situation. When the situation passes or is remedied, the anger subsides. The emotion then is not necessarily something which possesses a person like an evil spirit, who upon gaining hold will not budge. Nor are feelings of rage related always to one's own unresolved personal problems. Anger so seen in these passages is not so terrible; it can arise in the most common and natural of circumstances. It can be quite appropriate and can even be constructive.

The search through this subcollection of texts reveals anger described in a neutral and natural manner in diverse scenes. It appears in ordinary discourse, in reaction to false accusations, to disappointment (army of Amaziah), to stupidity (Philistine lords), to exasperation (Jacob, Hannah), to unacceptable military threats (Zebul, Saul), and to Yahweh (David, Samuel). Anger can arise from the outrage of personal or family affront (Dinah's brothers to her rape), from offense taken to cultic transgressions (Moses), from prophetic rage (Nathan, Elisha, Jeremiah) to unacceptable actions and from personal indignation from unjust social conditions (Nehemiah). The outrage can lead to constructive action seeking rectification of a wrong, whether it be to oneself, one's family, one's God or to others. The rummaging through the passages also

turned up miscellaneous cases of anger, such as Baalam's reaction to being pinned by his animal, a reference to King David's anger using animal language, and Joseph's urging his brothers not to become angry with themselves.

That anger appears with such a large number of persons in diverse contexts indicates the emotion's ubiquity. As related in these passages, it can be a natural and expected part of life, serving a useful function. When the expectations upon a person are too high, when something is unacceptable to one, when one perceives a wrong committed against oneself or another, it can be a healthy expression of non-acceptance which may lead to constructive action. It can signal the reaching of a limit by the person, beyond which he/she will not tolerate any further encroachments. As such it can be related in a healthy manner to one's survival and personal worth. Anger can be a form of assertion of oneself in one's existence against thrusts from without which would demean or harm the person or others. Anger can be a signal of strength, of one's standing ground against unreasonable actions of others. Anger can be an expression thus of caring, whether about others or oneself. Far from being only bad, anger can be most appropriate and constructive.

Summary of Anger in a Descriptive Usage. This study has examined the usage of anger in the narrative passages used in a descriptive sense by dividing the inquiry into two areas: anger used inappropriately, and anger used appropriately or neutrally. An entire picture concerning anger needs to be formulated.

The combination of both sub-collections of passages unfolds a comprehensive picture of anger in the human situation. A di-polar nature of the emotion emerges from scrutinizing both sections: anger can be either good or bad, appropriate or inappropriate, constructive or destructive. It has the potentiality for either extreme but not the necessity for either end. Anger can also be a neutral momentary flash which upon expression, vanishes.

Anger is disclosed through the passages to have a wide span in its spectrum of appearance. It can be either a situational, immediate and specific appearance, or the anger can be more diffuse, generalized and not related to the immediate circumstance. It can address specific wrongs, or it can address unresolved personal problems. While a destructive potentiality towards hate, harm and murder is seen, a constructive possibility towards rectification of grievances (both social and individual) is depicted. It can either be resolved quickly with an appropriate correction or the matter, or it can endure as a mood not easily reconciled. Some scenes involving anger in fact achieve a cessation of the hostility when the angry person is killed and not before. As a mood, anger can appear as vexation, agitation, depression, bitterness, hate, enmity and resentments. Anger can be directed either inwardly at oneself or outwardly at others.

Both accounts relate the large frequency of occurrence of the emotion. It is manifested in nearly every imaginable context by a great many persons, some very prominent in the Hebrews' history. Esau, Jacob, Moses, Samuel, Saul, David, Elisha and Nehemiah all lost their tempers. The amount of occurrence, the number of individuals involved, the range

and possibilities of the emotion indicate a universal quality. People at all times and contexts become angry. It is as natural and as universal as any other human emotion, be it crying or laughing. As an emotion, it can have multifarious nuances and uses.

As for the source of anger, the subcollections complement one another. Jealousy definitely can arouse a fierce, sometimes irrevocable wrath. The quest for power or military security can result in arousal to anger. Thwarted expectations, whether realistic or not on the part of the individual, emerges as another basis for hot spirits. Offenses and crimes to oneself or to things that one cares about forms yet another source for rage. A common point of agreement comes with the relation of displeasure and anger; the basis of all anger is some form of displeasure.

Every anger is seen to have a reason relating to some event, with the exception of a couple of passages which attribute enmity or indignation as proceeding from Yahweh. There is a reason for every anger, be it immediate or non-situational, objective or personal. Thus, every anger is understandable. One needs only to learn of the reasons for the anger, however hidden they may be. A common root from which much anger stems seems to be from the passages the quest for one's security and survival. The texts dealing with jealous rages, ire from military circumstances, and outrage from personal affronts seem to indicate this. Other passages, however, involve matters of less ultimate seriousness and involve instances of frustration, dissatisfaction and displeasure.

Though some anger is seen as being irreconcilable, there are several notable examples of reconciliation occurring. Involved usually

is a gesture of good will (Laban, Esau), use of reason (Naaman, Jonah), and forgiveness (Esau, Joseph). Sometimes a scene of anger is neither resolved with reconciliation nor by destruction: it either passes or is no longer dealt with. The most dramatic forms of resolving forms of anger through reconciliation, however, involve a dianoetic approach and acts of forgiveness and good-will.

To abstract the summary of the findings in the descriptive usages of anger, it is a common, universal human emotion with potentialities for both destruction or constructiveness. It can either be inappropriate or appropriate according to the situation, and its causes can be either objective or personal problems. Anger is related to displeasure, offense, threat and survival. It is considered neither good nor bad by the passages, but as a natural factor of life. Though some wraths are not to be terminated short of destruction, reconciliation is seen to occur mostly through an active act of forgiveness.

### Collective Usages of Anger

The final collection of passages dealing with anger in the Old Testament, will be termed "Collective." Part of these passages speak of anger in the context of enemies, either to an individual or the nation. Another part mentions anger as a corporate reaction. Prophetic literature is contained in both parts.

The fury of the enemy is often acknowledged, such as in Psalm

7:6--

Arise, O Yahweh, in thy anger,  
lift thyself up against the fury (חֵרָא) of my enemies;  
awake, O my God; thou has appointed a judgment. (RSV)



The writer of this supplication psalm acknowledges the reality of the enemy's fury which is expressed in anger language. Connected by association is the desire for attack and destruction with fury and anger.

Other references to the fury of the enemy appear in oracles of Yahweh, the first being a promise, the other a judgment:

Isaiah 51: 12-13

I, I am he that comforts you;  
 who are you that you are afraid of man who dies,  
 of the son of man who is made like grass,  
 and have forgotten Yahweh, your Maker,  
 who stretched out the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth,  
 and fear continually all the day  
 because of the fury(אֵף) of the oppressor,  
 when he sets himself to destroy?  
 And where is the fury(אֵף) of the oppressor? (RSV)

Isaiah 37:28-29

I know your sitting down  
 and your going out and coming in,  
 and your raging(אֵף) against me.  
 Because you have raged(אֵף) against me  
 and your arrogance has come to my ears,  
 I will put my hook in your nose  
 and bit in your mouth,  
 and I will turn you back on the way  
 by which you came. (RSV)

In both cases the mention of the anger is done in a military context.

The oppressor mentioned in the first passage and Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, who is addressed in the second text represent military forces which wage war. The term used in the first passage is אֵף, which is a standard term meaning fury, burning anger, while the term in the second passage is אֵף, which means to rage. Attributed to the destruction of the oppressor in waging war is the emotion of anger. The destructiveness of corporate combat is expressed with anger language.

In other speeches of Yahweh, there are references of the anger of an unnamed enemy:

Isaiah 41:11

Behold, all who are incensed(  $\text{לִי־יִנְיִן}$  ) against you  
shall be put to shame and confounded;  
those who strive against you  
shall be as nothing and perish. (RSV)

Isaiah 45:24

Only in Yahweh, it shall be said of me,  
are righteousness and strength;  
to him shall come and be ashamed,  
all who are incensed(  $\text{לִי־יִנְיִן}$  ) against him. (RSV)

In the first passage judgment comes to those hostile to Isreal, while in the other text it comes to those hostile to Yahweh. The term used in both passages is the verb  $\text{יָנִין}$ , which means "to burn, be kindled, to be of anger."<sup>23</sup> The attitude of the enemies is characterized by anger language.

Other anger terms are used in the context of hostile rulers:

Jeremiah 51:58-59

They shall roar together like lions;  
they shall growl like lions' whelps,  
While they are inflamed( $\text{וַאֲנִי־אֶחַיֵּם$ ) I will prepare them a feast  
and make them drunk, till they swoon away  
and sleep a perpetual sleep  
and not wake, says Yahweh. (RSV)

Hosea 7:5-7

On the day of our king the princes  
became sick with the heat of wine;  
he stretched out his hand with mockers.  
For like an oven their hearts burn with intrigue;  
all night their anger( $\text{וְאֵתֵרֵם}$ ) smolders;  
in the morning it blazes like a flaming fire.  
All of them are hot as an oven,  
and they devour their rulers.  
All their kings have fallen;  
and none of them calls upon me. (RSV)

Both passages represent oracles of judgment from Yahweh against His foes. What is not punished is the emotion of anger in and of itself.

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<sup>23</sup>Gesenius, 354.

What is punished is the forsaking of Yahweh, and in other cases the hostility against His people. The enemies of Yahweh will receive their recompense.

Besides the passages pertaining to enemies, there is the set of passages which relate anger as a corporate action. One case found in Esther 1:18 has the court wise men advise King Ahasuerus after his being insulted by Queen Vashti that when the people in the kingdom hear of it that they will be enraged (אִשָּׁרָה). A consensus reaction of corporate nature to the king's being flouted is stated as being that of rage, normally thought of in individual terms.

Two oracles of prophetic judgment are delivered because of a people's wrath:

Isaiah 14:6

Yahweh has broken the staff of the wicked,  
the scepter of rulers,  
that smote the peoples in wrath (אִשָּׁרָה)  
with unceasing blows,  
that ruled the nations in anger (אִשָּׁרָה)  
with unrelenting persecution." (RSV)

Amos 1:11-12

Thus says Yahweh:

"For three transgression of the Ammonites,  
and for four, I will not revoke the punishment;  
because he pursued his brother with the sword  
and cast off all pity,  
and his anger (אִשָּׁרָה) tore perpetually  
and he kept his wrath (אִשָּׁרָה) for ever.  
So I will send a fire upon Teman,  
and it shall devour the strongholds of Bozrah." (RSV)

The two passages represent a judgment against a people by Yahweh for social injustice, for crimes against humanity. The nature of the injustice is characterized in each instance by the antithesis of אִשָּׁרָה, anger and אִשָּׁרָה, fury, of a merciless, unrelenting persecuting quality.

These passages come closest of any that will be reviewed in this study to connect anger with sadism and wanton infliction of pain. The anger of the Ammonites mentioned in the Amos text is directly connected with murder. While the relentless nature of the infliction of pain is emphasized in the Isaiah passage, the Amos text underscores the aspect of the duration of the anger. Both angers have a deep consuming aspect to them. Both are destructive; both lead to social injustice, and both are rendered as fit for Yahweh's judgment.

The last passage in this collection is also part of an oracle of Yahweh's judgment against the faithlessness of Jerusalem:

Isaiah 8:21-22

They will pass through the land, greatly distressed and hungry; and when they are hungry, they will be enraged (עֲרִיבִים) and will curse their king and their God, and turn their faces upward; and they will look to the earth, but behold, distress and darkness, the gloom of anguish; and they will be thrust into thick darkness." (RSV)

Isaiah the prophet is speaking from what Yahweh has told him concerning the faithlessness of Jerusalem and their practice of consulting the wizards and mediums for the future instead of relying upon Yahweh. Their judgment is that they will have no home nor any food. In such a condition they will be infuriated against all authorities and will blame others for their own plight. But no solace shall they receive, only further judgment of darkness and distress. On one level the rage mentioned here is the corporate response to times of duress and to hunger. On another level, it represents a corporate reaction of distress to Yahweh's judgment of their faithlessness.

To conclude this collection of passages, it can be said that anger here is used in a multitude of contexts. It is used to charac-

terize corporate hostility in the form of the aggressor's rampaging by warfare. Terms of anger are used to describe the hate and the destructive intent of the enemy. The foe described here in this collection may take the form of one inimical to the individual writing the psalm, or to the people of Israel, or to Yahweh Himself. Thus the use of anger terms to delineate the hate and enmity of the foe is usually general, as there are several contexts referred to. Terms of anger are also used to portray acts of social injustice involving merciless or enduring persecution. Here anger is associated with enmity and with the hate that leads to injustice and brutality. These meet with the judgment of Yahweh. Anger is also attributed to the reactions of a people to events arousing unhappiness.

The attributing of anger to the foe and to social injustice portrays an ugly aspect of anger. On the corporate level it appears to have few redeeming virtues. It is associated with war and combat and is linked with corporate enmity and hate. It is connected with destruction. In this set of passages, anger in the corporate usage is rarely mentioned in a neutral sense or context, much less a constructive one.

#### Old Testament Anthropology of Anger

For an exploration into an anthropology of anger in the Old Testament, this study divided all of the passages containing explicit usages of terms of anger into six categories: wise man-fool, righteous man-wicked man, king's anger, hot-tempered and quick to temper, descriptive and collective. The classification was based upon an evaluation of content and represents an arbitrary sorting for heuristic pur-

poses. Not intended to be a final assessment, the manner of assortment is to aid the scrutinizing of passages.

An abstracted summary of the conclusions found in each collection of passages might turn up the following:

(A) Fool- wise man: Anger is associated with the fool, an unfavorable evaluation. With the wise man is associated prudence, care and control. Anger is therefore to be avoided, especially quick or unrestrained displays or prolonged anger. The terms employed suggested a general, deeper form of displeasure, such as vexation or raging.

(B) Wicked- Righteous Man: The wicked become angry, while the righteous are urged to restrain from it possibly as an indication of their trusting in Yahweh's ways. The life situation addressed is the prospering of the evil. Anger is to be avoided.

(C) Anger of the King: The anger of the king is dangerous, represents potential destruction and is not to be incurred, if possible, through caution and wisdom. If encountered, his anger is to be submitted to and not be confronted or responded to in anger. Anger is to be suppressed. The specific situation addressed is the fury of a ruler.

(D) Hot-tempered and Quick-tempered Man: The hot-tempered man is to be avoided; he causes trouble by engendering quarrels and disruption. His excessive, chronic and explosive anger creates ill-will. The quick-tempered man is likewise seen unfavorably. These forms of anger are to be avoided, for they are seen as being destructive and divisive. Advocated is restraint, self-control, slowness to anger, all of which are traits of the wise man. Conciliatory words are to be used in situations of anger, not returned anger.

(E)Descriptive: Anger can be inappropriate, neutral, or appropriate according to the context of its occurrence. It has the potentiality for destruction and for constructive action. It may be a specific and proportional reaction to an immediate situation, or it may assume the form of a diffuse, generalized anger appearing as a mood, such as depression, jealousy, hate, bitterness. Anger involves displeasure and often is related to matters pertaining to one's survival. As a human emotion, it is a natural factor of life and seems to be a universal characteristic of persons. Every anger has a reason, and the emotion as such is considered neither good nor bad. Reasoning and forgiveness can sometimes effect reconciliation.

(F)Corporate usage: Anger is revealed to exist on a collective level, and is associated with war, the enemy, hate, enmity and social injustice. Only a few references of neutral tint occur. A person's anger on a collective basis is not depicted as constructive. Anger here has heavy connotations of destructiveness.

Generally, the Old Testament attitude towards anger is that it should be avoided. Though there are quite a few narrative passages depicting a neutral or even constructive expression of anger, there are few passages which openly advocate anger, if any at all. The reasons may vary but the admonitions towards avoidance are similar. The writers of the wisdom literature connect ire with the tradition of the fool and urge restraint and self-control. They expose a destructive aspect to an excessive, quick, chronic or prolonged display of wrath. It is seen to be divisive in human relationships, creating ill feelings and is disruptive of a society's harmonious functioning through the enmity and strife

engendered. Other motivations for avoidance are cultic considerations and possible harm resulting from an expression of the feeling.

While anger is generally espoused to be avoided, it would be a mistake to conclude that anger is seen as totally bad or only good when it is expressed as righteous indignation. There are too many exceptions in the Old Testament to uphold this contention. Anger is mentioned in many situations as being neutral according to the context; certainly the person becoming infuriated is not rebuked in such cases. In fact, throughout the narratives, anger appears very naturally and seems to be accepted by the writer as well as the characters portrayed in the account. There are very few instances of a person being upbraided for expressing angry feelings. Nor are all constructive actions always the result of working for another's behalf. The truth is that the responses of one angry vary according to the perceived offense and the value placed upon the response. Though normally wholesale slaughter receives a disfavorable rating (at least in some circles today!), the brothers of Dinah receive only a reproach from Jacob, their father, who is upset by the trouble he may now have with the neighbors. Though their anger could hardly be termed as righteous indignation, it is not judged wrong by either the writer or by the other story characters.

Anger's potentiality for destruction is depicted by the Old Testament writers. The king's anger is to be feared; the fool's anger is divisive; the hot-tempered man's fury is disruptive; collective anger appears in war. In the narrative sections, some displays of anger are associated with hate, and murderous desires. It can result in irrevocable rifts in relationships, atrocities and even civil war. On a collec-



tive level, it is associated with hate, enmity and deplorable social injustice. However, again we would be incorrect to conclude that this is the only portrait of the emotion. The constructive side of anger's potentiality is related. In the narrative passages, anger precedes the rectification of cultic transgressions, declaration of prophetic announcements and of correction of social evil. Some passages even show anger to be justified! An assertion that all anger is destructive would not be confirmed by the Old Testament writers, who are not against anger as such. Rather admonished against are certain forms of expression. Destructive anger is to be avoided.

The universality of anger seems to be attested to by the number of accounts addressing multifarious situations. The wisdom literature which was compiled through the observations of many generations and of different cultures from a myraid of life situations and experiences, speak of it as a fact of human existence to be dealt with. It occurs in the cultic setting, as even the righteous become frustrated. In nearly every conceivable context it appears: political, courtly, military, social, historical, and in the affairs of everyday living. It is as pervasive as people are.

The expressions and degrees of anger are varied. Though it may manifest itself in a quick rage that quickly abates, it can appear in general vexation or other moods, such as depression, hatred and enmity. It can be chronically or excessively expressed by some; it possibly can be restrained by others. It can be directed inwardly or outwardly, towards persons, objects or even God.

The different accounts seem to concur that anger is a part of

persons. It is not something extraneous which seizes a person and takes possession; rather, it proceeds from within. The emotion is understood to have a reason and a cause, although the causes would not be agreed upon. The wisdom writers would attribute the emotion to the person's being a fool and not having learned wisdom, prudence and self-control. At other places, anger might be accounted for by a personality trait, such as the hot-head and the man hasty to ire. In the narrative, the reasons for anger are many: jealousy, resentments, frustrations, threatened security or survival, displeasure, and thwarted expectations. In the narrative sections, anger is seen in non-evaluative terms and seems natural.

The accounts agree that human anger is something that is to be dealt with. Advocated by the wisdom literature is a preventive approach of avoidance through self-control, of a finesse of bearing acquired through the attainment of knowledge. Soft words are held up as the means of cooling tempers. In the narrative accounts, reasoning sometimes cools infuriation. Reconciliation also occurs through forgiveness.

To compact the conclusions concerning an Old Testament anthropology of anger, this study arrives at the following statements:

- (1) Anger is a universally shared emotions of humans involving displeasure.
- (2) Anger is seen as having the potential for destructiveness and for constructiveness. Generally it is the former which receives the most mention.
- (3) Because anger is often seen as neutral or even justified, the Old

Testament writers can be concluded not to be repulsed by anger itself, but particular forms and uses of it.

- (4) The emotion can assume many forms and degrees. It can be reactive to an immediate situation or it can be reactive to a more diffuse situation. The latter tends to assume the posture of a mood, reflected in hate, depression, enmity.
- (5) A person is seen as being able to restrain and hold in check his/her anger. Discipline, self-control, the learning of wisdom and prudence seem to be the ways to prevent its eruption.
- (6) Anger and the enmity generated by it are seen as a threat to the harmonious intercourse of humans trying to live together. Wrath can divide and disrupt. It can impede communication between persons.
- (7) Anger is seen to exist on a collective level. It is associated with war and hostility characteristic of the enemy. Its image on this corporate level is that of destruction, ill-will and evil.
- (8) Anger is generally considered as being something to be avoided.
- (9) Prevention is one of the strongest advocated positions for dealing with anger. Reasoning with the person also appears as an understanding. Reconciliation through soft words or through forgiveness and good-will also is portrayed.

## NEW TESTAMENT USAGE OF ANGER

Possibly a reflection of its shorter duration of writing, the New Testament has proportionately fewer references to anger than does the Old. It is also leaner in terms of richness of contexts and different word usage. The number of groupings of passages for the purposes of this study are less. All passages containing explicit mention of anger will be classified into two collections: instructions in the church setting and descriptive usages. Of the two, more texts appear in the former category.

### Anger In the Church Context

The early church undoubtedly quoted statements and teachings attributed to Jesus in reference to its own situation, which is probably one reason for the preservation and for the writing of many extant texts. One teaching very likely quoted often in the early church is that of the Sermon on the Mount. In the fifth chapter of Matthew's account is an important section dealing with anger.

Matthew 5:21-26:

You have heard it that it was said to the ancients: 'You shall not murder. The one who might murder is liable to judgment.' And I say to you that all being angry (ὀργή, ὀργενοῦς) with their brother will be liable to judgment. The one who might say to his brother, 'raka' he will be liable to the sanhedrin. The one who might say, 'fool,' he will be liable to the hell of Gehenna. Therefore, bring your gift to the altar and there remember that your brother has this against you, send away your gift before the altar and go first and become reconciled to your brother and then coming, bring your gift. Be well disposed to your opponent in a law suit until of him you are with him in the road; lest the opponent hand you over to the judge and even the judgment of the servants of the court, and you are thrown to the guard. Truly I say to you, that you come not from there until you have given back the final cent."

The passage might actually be classified as a legal teaching of Jesus and as such would constitute perhaps a separate and unique classification all of its own of which it would be the only passage. Instead, it will be included under instructions to the churches, as it could no doubt serve this purpose and very likely did.

The passage is itself a part of a larger passage in which Jesus relates his newer understanding of the Law from the Torah. A series of antithetic passages begins with verse 21 and runs through verse 48 dealing with murder(v.21), adultery (v. 27), divorce (v. 31), swearing falsely (v. 33), retribution (v. 38) and loving one's neighbor and hating one's enemy (v. 43). Jesus' teaching reveals him to take different and radical understandings of the Law by his going far beyond the normal and the current interpretation of his time.

It is in the context of murder that Jesus speaks of anger. Though the understanding is that murder will bring judgment, Jesus proclaims that being angry with one's brother will bring judgment. From the act, Jesus seems to progress into the intention as being the thing which is culpable. As indicated by the sentence structure of the Greek text, the three items of being angry with one's brother, calling him "raka" and yelling "fool" at him are in parallel with one another, and seem to have an escalating quality of judgment assigned to them. The penalty increases from a general judgment to a reference probably to the 70 body Sanhedrin, to finally to Gehenna's fires. Both the terms of raka and fool are insults and may be expansions and definitions of the meaning of anger here. Jesus' reference to anger would include merely the hurling of an insult at one's brother. This deserves judgment, just

as an act of murder which is proscribed by the Decalogue.

The term "brother" has several possible interpretations. One is a literal familial understanding in which it is wrong to become angry with one's own kin. Another is that "brother" could refer to a fellow Jew. Yet another interpretation is that of a fellow Christian or even the generalized interpretation of one's fellow man. If this passage were read in the early church, it no doubt would assume at least the interpretation of brother as one's fellow Christian, probably in the same congregation. Certainly this would be a highly probable application of the text. If this were so, then the sense of the text is that besides the concept that intentions are important, and besides the concept that a broader and more radical understanding of the Law is called for, that Christians are not to become angry with one another.

The passage then proceeds to its conclusion, signalled by the characteristic "therefore." Two settings in parallel are then depicted. One scene is in a cultic context of a person offering a gift before the altar while being angry with his brother. The other scene is in a court context of a person entangled with a disputation of legal nature. Advocated in the first setting is immediate reconciliation between offended parties. The word used for reconciliation, διαλλάσσειν, is used only once in the New Testament and varies from the commonly employed term, καταλλάσσειν. Apparently the term in the text carries a connotation of being thoroughly changed.<sup>24</sup> Before one is to deposit one's gift be-

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<sup>24</sup>Robert Young, Young's Analytical Concordance to the Bible (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1972), 798.

fore the altar, the person is to settle his/her anger with one's brother. In the court setting, one is likewise to make amends and settle the dispute lest a keeping of distance leads to landing in jail through an accumulation of enmity. The person involved here is an opponent in a law-suit, whom may not be known well. If one is to be reconciled with one's accuser in what probably is an unpleasant and antagonistic situation, how much more is one to be reconciled with one's brother. Reconciliation of these relationships is part of the radicalized understanding of the Law that is the thrust of Jesus' statements here. The self-understanding of persons here is that one seeks for the optimum benefit and wholeness of the relationship. Not only is the Decalogue proscription concerning murder expanded to intentions here (as represented by anger), but reconciliation is actively advocated. It is given priority over cultic and legal procedures. One is not to rest until one's relation with one's brother is restored and whole.

There are other passages in the New Testament which are written explicitly for the church situation. One such passage involving a mention of anger is found in the Pastoral Letter of Titus. Here the emotion is listed in the seventh verse of the first chapter as one of the qualities a bishop is to avoid. Besides being blameless, the bishop is not to be

ἀνθάδῃ, arrogant,  
 ὀργίλον, quick-tempered,  
 πάραινον, addicted to wine,  
 πλῆκτην pugnacious, a bully,  
 ἀισχροκερδῆ, fond of dishonest gain.

The adjectival term, ὀργίλος, means "inclined to anger, quick-tempered,"<sup>25</sup> and is used only once in the canonical works. Its use is reminiscent of the Proverbs verse admonishing avoidance of such a trait. Instead of being understood as a general saying, here the reference is quite explicit: it is the bishop who is not to be quick-tempered. Apparently this characteristic interferes with the proper functioning of his task.

The anger of one having authority is similarly urged to be restrained.

Ephesians 6:4

And fathers, do not provoke to anger (παροργίζετε) your children, but rear them in the training and the instruction of the Lord. (RSV)

The instruction is to the heads of the households in the congregation and is contained in a series of instructions to wives and husbands, fathers and children, and slaves and masters concerning relationships in the household. A symmetry appears as after the children are told to obey their parents (according to the fifth commandment in the Decalogue), the fathers are instructed not to abuse their authority by provoking their dependent children to anger. The infuriation noted is likely a natural one arising from excessive frustration and powerlessness. Instead, the children are to be nurtured in the discipline and training of the Lord, which undoubtedly would mean in the context of the congregation. In a later work not included in the New Testament, a

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<sup>25</sup>Walter Bauer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), 583.



similar theme appears:

Barnabas 19:7 (Didache 4:10)

Though shalt not command in bitterness thy bondservant or thine handmaid who set their hope on the same God, lest haply they should cease to fear the God who is over both of you.<sup>26</sup>

The term used is  $\piικρ\acute{\iota}\alpha$  which means "bitterness," a term that this study has considered previously as a form of a harsh angry feeling. The abuse of authority from a coupling of position with harsh anger creates resentment and ill-will, feelings which will eventually undermine existing authority. The overly frustrated person might even lose his/her faith in God.

Most of the passages mentioning wrath are written to church conflicts. Paul in his second letter to the Corinthians (12:20) writes them that he is afraid that if he were to visit their congregation that he would discover undesirable things such as jealousy, slander, quarreling, anger( $\Thetaυπο\acute{\iota}$ ), selfishness, gossip, conceit and disorder. The situation addressed seems to be that of divisive and church-rending strife. Lumping wrath with such destructive items as jealousy, slander and disorder cast anger in an unhealthy light. In another reference found in I Timothy, the author writes: "I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger( $\delta\acute{\epsilon}\rho\gamma\eta$ ) or quarreling." (RSV) This instruction pertaining to general church procedure and protocol presupposes the existence of anger and strife in the congregation, in sufficiently large measure to disrupt prayer and group services them-

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<sup>26</sup>J.B. Lightfoot, The Apostolic Fathers (London: Macmillan, 1912), 286. For subsequent texts in which this study uses translations of Lightfoot, the reference (Lightfoot) will be employed.

selves. Anger again is associated with division in the church.

In the context of church strife, anger is often associated with an unregenerated earthly life. One of the writers declares:

Colossians 3:5-8

Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these the wrath of God is coming. In these you once walked, when you lived in them. But now put them all away: anger (ὀργή), wrath (θυμός), malice, slander, and foul talk from your mouth. (RSV)

Later in the same passage, the writer refers to these in the light of the old nature which is now changed to the new nature (life in Christ). Similarly, Paul in Galatians 5:19-21 mentions anger as being part of the way of flesh:

Galatians 5:19-21

Now the works of the flesh are plain: Immorality, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, anger (ὀργή), selfishness, dissension, party spirit, envy, drunkenness, carousing and the like. (RSV)

The traits listed under the works of the flesh are then contrasted to the "fruits of the Spirit" which include love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Paul's letter is written to a congregation with a supposed Christian understanding. Not only is the emotion of rage associated with numerous divisive and destructive qualities, but it is categorized under a human nature unregenerated by life in Jesus Christ. Implied is that of a spiritual understanding concerning the place of anger: it is part of an unregenerated nature. It is not included as one of the fruits of the Spirit.

The writer of Ephesians has a similar leaning. He speaks of an old nature, associated with corruption and a former way of life, which

is opposite to the new nature, created in the likeness of God(4:17-24). To the way of the old nature is attached the traits of lying, evil talk, bitterness(πικρία), wrath(θυμός), anger(ὀργή), clamor and slander, and malice, among other things. Such attributes tend to have a toxic effect upon a group, poisoning the atmosphere and rending group cohesion. Again anger is considered as being destructive and not part of the life in Christ.

However, the writer of Ephesians differs from Paul and from the author of Colossians by implying that all anger may not necessarily be bad.

Ephesians 4:26-27

Be angry(ὀργίζεσθε) but do not sin(ἁμαρτάνετε);  
do not let the sun go down on your anger(παροργισμῷ)  
and give no opportunity to the devil(διαβολῇ). (RSV)

The phrase is similar to Psalm 4:4-- "Be angry(tremble), but sin not; commune with your hearts on your beds, and be silent." (RSV) The words for anger in the Ephesians passage change from the commonly employed term, ὀργίζω, to the rarely used (at least in the New Testament) word, παροργισμός. The only other place that the derivative of this latter term occurs is later in the same book at the part we have previously inspected when fathers are urged not to provoke their children to anger. The term itself is defined by Bauer as "angry mood, anger," <sup>27</sup> and may signal a great degree of the feeling. To deal with this emotion, the writer commands that the anger is to be resolved quickly. It is not to be allowed to continue into the night, for the emotion is seen as the

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<sup>27</sup>Bauer, 635.

playground for the devil. Anger's potential as a well of trouble is recognized, but becoming angry, at least in this passage, is not as such condemned. In the light of the same author's listing of anger as being part of the old nature following this passage, it might be concluded that he is speaking of a continued state of emotion or of a destructive anger. Becoming angry expressed in the verb form is not itself repudiated, providing its resolution occurs quickly.

The writer of James tends to agree with the authors of Colossians, Ephesians and with Paul in contrasting anger with the way of the Spirit:

James 1:19-21

Know this, my beloved brethren. Let every man be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger(ὀργή), for the anger(ὀργή) of man does not work the righteousness(δικαιοσύνη) of God. Therefore put away all filthiness and rank growth of wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. (RSV)

The situation addressed here is reminiscent of our earlier discussion in the section of the "quick-tempered man." There we inferred that one of the situations addressed is humans unwilling to listen to one another before flying off at the handle in rage. In the James passage, the congregation is urged to listen well and to be slow to speak and to be slow to become angry. Verse 20 is the motivation clause for the admonition in verse 19: man's anger is antithetical to God's righteousness. Not only is anger considered as inappropriate, but is essentially wicked, something which hampers the work of God's righteousness. Anger in this passage is definitely advocated as something to be avoided.

The dim view of anger is perpetuated through the later writings, a view which deepens in disfavor. For example, in the letter of

Ignatius to the church of Philadelphia (non-canonical), he writes:

I Philadelphia 8:1

I did therefore my own part, as a man composed unto union. But where there is division and anger(ὀργή), God abides not. Now the Lord forgives all men when they repent, if repenting they return to the unity of God and to the council of the bishop. (Lightfoot)

Anger here is associated with division and trouble in congregations. In fact, God does not abide where anger and division reign, as it is not in the spirit of the church for this to occur. Unity is effected upon true repentance. Anger and division is to be reconciled by repentance and obedience.

In other non-canonical and later writings, anger is seen as something to be avoided.

I Clement 13:1

Let us therefore be lowly-minded, brethren, laying aside all arrogance and conceit and folly and anger(ὀργή), and let us do that which is written. (Lightfoot)

I Clement 63:2

For you will give us great joy and gladness, if you render obedience unto the things written by us through the Holy Spirit, and root out the unrighteous anger(ὀργή) of your jealousy, according to the entreaty which we have made for peace and concord in this letter. (Lightfoot)

Didache 3:2

My child, flee from every evil and everything that resembles it. Be not angry(ὀργίλος), for anger(ὀργή) leads to murder, nor jealous nor contentious nor wrathful(θυμικός); for of all these things murders are engendered. (Lightfoot)

The passage from the Didache stresses the potential destruction of anger which can lead to murder. This dictum seems to represent a reification of Jesus' legal teaching from the Sermon on the Mount which mentions anger in the context of the sixth commandment of the Decalogue concerning murder. Anger is not the only trait which may engender murder. Jealousy, strife, and wrath can also. Because of this destructiveness,

these traits are to eschewed.

One later, non-canonical work, the Shepherd of Hermas goes to an extreme in describing anger.

Mandate(5,2,4)

But the angry temper(ὀξύχολία) is in the first place foolish, fickle and senseless; then from foolishness is engendered bitterness (πικρία), and from bitterness wrath(θυρός), and from wrath anger (ὀργή), and from anger spite(μῆνις); then spite(μῆνις) being composed of all these evil(κακῶν) elements becomes a great sin and incurable. (Lightfoot)

Mandate(5,2,7-8)

Then, when it has removed from that man, in whom it dwells, that man becomes emptied of the righteous spirit, and henceforth, being filled with evil spirits, he is unstable in all his reactions.... Thus then it happened to all persons of angry temper(ὀξύχολοις). Refrain therefore from angry temper(ὀξύχολίας), the most evil of evil spirits. But clothe yourself in long-suffering, and resist angry temper(ὀξύχολός) and bitterness(πικρία), and you shall be found in company with the holiness which is beloved of the Lord. (Lightfoot)

Mandate(6,2,5)

Now see the works of the angel of wickedness, also. First of all, he is quick-tempered(ὀξύχολός) and bitter(πικρία) and senseless, and his works are evil, overthrowing the servants of God.... 'Listen,' said he. 'When a fit of angry temper(ὀξύχολία) or bitterness (πικρία) come upon you, you know that he is in you.' (Lightfoot)

The three passages are striking in their comments upon anger. Two words are used in the passages which are not contained in any of the New Testament texts: ὀξύχολία, angry temper, and μῆνις, spite. In the first passage, a progression and association is established. From angry temper proceeds bitterness, then wrath, then anger and finally spite, which is described as a big and un placatable sin. The second passage has a person of angry temper (a non-New Testament term is used) being filled by evil spirits. The trait itself is designated as the most evil of evil spirits. The third passage expands upon this theme and proclaims that a method of detecting the presence of the angel of wickedness is a

fit of angry temper (non-New Testament term used). When one has this, then one is in the grasp of the angel of wickedness. But the views here are extreme and the words used not all the same as those in the New Testament or the Septuagint. Nevertheless, the message is unmistakable: anger is to be avoided.

A miscellaneous employment of a term of anger is used in Ignatius' letter to the Ephesians urging them to use anger of non-Christians as a form of witnessing to their faith.

I Ephesians 10:2

Pray without ceasing for the rest of mankind (for there is in them a hope of repentance), that they may find God. Therefore permit them to take lessons at least from your works. Against their bursts of wrath (ὀργῆς) be ye meek; against their proud words be ye humble; against their railings set ye your prayers;.... (Lightfoot)

The hostility of antagonistic non-Christians is to be responded not with returned antipathy, but with meekness to witness by example. The approach advocated here is likened to that of Proverbs 15:1 concerning a soft word in response to anger. Only here the purpose is quite specific: to witness for the Christian faith.

In summary it can be said that anger is largely looked upon askance by the New Testament writers who address church congregations. Anger is to be avoided. It is not to be directed and maintained against one's brother, in church settings; in positions of authority, persons are to be very careful with it. The emotion is generally seen as being destructive. It is associated with disruption, strife and trouble in the church. Anger is listed as a characteristic of the way of the flesh and is thus understood from a spiritual perspective. Reconciliation of a quick and direct nature are urged as a means of dealing with

the feeling.

### Descriptive Usages

Even in the descriptive passages, human anger tends to be viewed in a hostile and destructive nature. There are, however, a few notable exceptions. The descriptive passages generally align themselves with those which mention anger as a reaction to Jesus or to the faith, and those passages that do not fit this category.

The wisdom statement in James about man's anger not working the righteousness of God finds support in several texts. King Herod erupts into a furious (Matthew 2:16) rage (μάγῳν ἔθρυψεν) after realizing that his ruse has been discerned by the magi. When the foreign star-studiers come to Herod to ask where they might find the newly-born king of Judah, Herod consults his scholars, whose answer is Bethlehem. Wily, Herod asks them to come back and tell him, if they should find this king. When they do not return (the result of a dream, according to the story), Herod is frustrated and flies into a rage. His wickedness has been thwarted. But his anger is unabated. It leads him to command the wholesale slaughter of all infants less than two years of age in Bethlehem. Herod's fury results in an order of massacre.

As an adult Jesus faces similar threatening anger. His home synagogue (Luke 4:28) flies into a pitch of wrath (θυροῦ) when they hear him quoting from the prophet Isaiah and announcing his being the fulfillment of this hope, followed by a reference to the healing of Naaman, a non-Jew. Reacting to his statement of condemnation, the congregation rushes towards him, intending to hurl him from a promontory. Their at-



tempt, however, is unsuccessful with Jesus' slipping through the crowd. A potential scene of harm from anger is averted. In another scene, Jesus is depicted as responding to unwarranted hostility (John 7:23): "If on the sabbath a man receives circumcision, so that the law of Moses may not be broken, are you angry (χολᾷτε) with me because on the sabbath I made a man's whole body well? Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment." (RSV)

Yet another narration of a hostile and inappropriate outburst of anger is found in the book of Acts. Demetrius, a silversmith, rises before a crowd in Ephesus and delivers a speech charging that the idol-making business is jeopardized by Paul and his cohorts' preaching of an imageless god. Insinuated is that the very cult of the goddess Artemis might fall into disarray. Hearing the inflammatory words of the silversmith, the crowd erupts (Acts 19:28) into rage (πλήρεις θυμοῦ). One of Paul's companions is hauled around by the crowd, and the town is in an uproar that is quieted by threats of legal action for rioting. Here the anger is attributed to a band of persons as a corporate reaction. Though no destruction occurs other than the roughing up of an evangelist, the potentiality is there. The crowd fury is stemmed by a threat, which is a crude form of appealing to reason.

Narrative scenes are few in the non-canonical literature. Mentions that do occur cast the emotion in a destructive light. For example in I Clement 45:7 an allusion to the story of Daniel in the Old Testament describes those who conspired against him as "abominable men and full of wickedness were stirred up to such a pitch of wrath (θυμοῦ) as to bring cruel suffering upon them that served God in a holy and

blameless purpose." Elsewhere, the emotion of anger is attributed to the crowd that martyrs Polycarp: (Martyrdom of Polycarp 12:2) "When this [Polycarp's confessing to be a Christian] was proclaimed by the herald, the whole multitude both of Gentiles and of Jews who dwelt in Smyrna cried out with ungovernable wrath( $\Theta\upsilon\rho\acute{o}\varsigma$ ) and with a loud shout... asked the Asiarch Philip to let a lion loose upon Polycarp." In both of these cases, the wrath reaches such a pitch of fury that murder is desired by the enraged.

Not all descriptive usages of anger show anger in such an unfavorable appearance. There do exist passages portraying an anger appropriate to the situation. Included in this subset of passages are three parables and one narration of Jesus himself becoming angry.

In Matthew 18, Jesus tells the parable of the servant owing a debt. His lord lets the matter ride when the servant pleads his own case. But in an analogous situation of a subordinate owing the servant money, he is not merciful. When the lord discovers this, he becomes angry( $\ὀργισθεὶς$ ) and casts the servant into jail. The lord's anger is from the indignation concerning an unfair treatment. Though the angry reaction is an important part of the story, the parable is concerned primarily with the nature of forgiveness. As the servant was forgiven, so he should forgive. The application is clear: as we are forgiven by God, so we should forgive.

The parable of the King's Banquet is related in Matthew 22 by Jesus. When the king of a land sent servants out to issue invitations to his son's wedding, they are greeted in an ill fashion. The recipients of the request mock it, ignore it, and some even harm the invita-

tion bearers. The king reacts by becoming angry (ὀργίζεσθαι) and orders his troops to requite the evil by destroying their cities and by slaying the guilty. New invitations are then issued to anyone that can be found in the streets. The anger expressed by the king is an integral component of the story. Treating it solely in the context of the story, it is a reaction to a specific set of circumstances. The king is upset for at least three reasons: (1) some of his servants are actually murdered (2) the people's flouting of the king's invitation is tantamount to open rebellion of challenging his authority (3) he is snubbed. Retribution in the form of murder occurs.

Luke 14 contains a similar parable but one with a subtler motif. (The similarity leads one to suspect that one of the stories was derived from the other or both from a common source.) In the Lucan account a master of a household (not a king) sends out invitations for a banquet (not a wedding). The invitation, though, is not accepted, with one excuse after another being given by those who decline. When the servant reports to the master all the excuses he has encountered, the master is infuriated (ὀργίζεται) and orders that the servant proceed with dispatch to round up all the poor and the lame in the street to attend his banquet. The anger is a reaction to a specific set of events, and is triggered by outrage of the rebuffing of his invitation. There is no murder, no flouting of regal authority in this account. In the context of the story, the anger is a reaction of the rejection of a generous offer.

Finally, there is one narrative account which has Jesus himself become explicitly angry. The account is found in Mark 3:1-6 in the story of Jesus' healing the man with the withered hand on the Sabbath.

Persons watch to see if he will cure on the Sabbath which would be considered unlawful according to the fourth commandment of the Decalogue. Jesus' emotion comes after sensing the situation when he asks if it is lawful to heal on the Sabbath. With the silent non-response of the crowd, Jesus is filled with anger (μετ' οργης), being grieved with their insensitivity. His anger precedes his healing the man.

The passage is remarkable in its portrayal of Jesus in such human, natural terms. Jesus' anger is reactive to a specific event and precedes a constructive act of compassion. It seems related to a disappointment in the people's lack of understanding and to his own caring. His displeasure does not assume form through retaliation. Instead, the restoration of a withered hand follows.

The majority of narrative passages depict anger as being inappropriate. Anger is generally seen negatively. It is seen as having a potential for destruction.

Anger associated with humans is seen to arise from within to some event. It is not viewed, with the exception of one non-canonical work of extreme viewpoint, as something coming from without such as an evil spirit. It therefore is a part of a person's emotions. However, most of the New Testament passages depict anger as opposing a spiritual understanding from the perspective of the Christian faith. King Herod becomes angry and tries to kill Jesus; his synagogue tries to lynch him in anger; a crowd is angry and hostile with his curing persons on the Sabbath; a riot ensues from an enraged mob at Ephesus to Paul who preaches Christ. In the non-canonical works, Polycarp is martyred from an angry mob; Daniel of the Old Testament is plotted against by men de-

picted to be highly incensed. Even Jesus' anger at the silent on-lookers in Mark 3 is in reaction to their hostility and callousness which hardens their hearts. The anger of the parables might be seen as referring to the unmerciful and to the Jews who do not accept Jesus.

While most narrative passages depict anger as inappropriate and as even resisting the will of God, some passages have anger occurring as a response that is appropriate and proportional to the situation. Admittedly, these passages are few. The sole narrative passage involves Jesus' feeling angry. In the parables anger occurs in the story as one of the characters reacts to the context by becoming infuriated. There are a few faint references to the constructiveness of anger. Primarily coming to fore is again the passage of Jesus and the man with the dried out hand. Jesus' anger precedes his healing the man.

#### New Testament Anthropology of Anger

Combining the findings from the collection of passages involving anger in the church context and in descriptive usages, we can attempt synthesizing a New Testament anthropology of anger. One of the more glaring similarities of views of the two passages is the potential for destructiveness of human anger. Anger is seldomly held forth for its constructive possibilities. Even rarer is there anything resembling an endorsement of it. Far from it as anger is to be avoided. One is not to become angry with his/her brother; a bishop is not to be quick-tempered; anger is seen as causing disruption and division in the congregation.

Both accounts seem to attribute anger as a part of an unregen-

erated human nature. It assumes a spiritual understanding. As a component of the fleshly way of life, it is in opposition to a spiritual existence understood as life in Christ. The narrative passages seem to reflect and support James' understanding of human anger as not doing the work of God, because most of the persons become angry in opposition to Jesus or other men of faith. Their reaction often leads to the intent for murder. As such, the narrative passages may reflect an early situation in which there was much hostile opposition to Christianity.

While anger in the collection pertaining to the church context is seen as arising from within and disrupting, the anger in the narrative passages is viewed as proceeding from outside against the church or Jesus. Thus human anger is not seen only as emanating from enemies outside the church. It is not a function of the enemy alone, as it breaks out within the close living situation of the congregation. But its effect is much the same by its working against the righteousness of God. By its appearing from without and from within in many different contexts and churches, human anger is seen as a part of the human condition, and as universal as the unregenerated man. Again anger is understood from a Christian understanding of those being in the spiritual and the rest of humanity, who is not.

Not only for the individual but for the group is anger harmful. Collective anger is never depicted as constructive but as being destructive, resulting in uproar and cries for murder. In the congregation, it is associated with enmity, strife and division. It renders asunder; it creates poisonous surroundings which hamper the growth of the spirit. Communications and relationships are broken off.

While the vast majority of verses in both collections reveal anger as destructive, there are a few passages in each which show a glimmer of recognition its potentiality for construction. The anger of an opponent can be an opportunity for witnessing for one's faith through returned meekness. Jesus' anger preceded a healing. The scarcity of such passages is conspicuous, leading to the conclusion that potentiality for good is not strongly associated with human anger.

How to handle human wrath is treated in several ways: reconciliation, repentance, restraint. The Matthew 5 and the Ephesians 4 passages advocate a quick, immediate and direct reconciliation with those one is angry with. The author of James admonishes persons to be slow to anger and quick to listen. Several writers, including Paul, urge repentance which would assume the form of a returning to the way of the Spirit.

The summary of the findings of this study's look into the New Testament can be listed as follows:

- (1) Anger is seen to occur upon the individual and the collective levels.
- (2) Anger is basically destructive. The references implying constructive human anger are few and faint.
- (3) On an individual level, it is a trait of the way of the flesh which is opposed to the way of the Spirit. As a trait of an unregenerated nature, it works against the righteousness of God.
- (4) On the collective level, wrath is associated with mob rioting and murder.
- (5) In the group setting of the church congregation, it is associated with division and strife. Its force is towards disunity.

(6) Anger is to be avoided.

(7) Reconciliation, repentance and restraint are the different methods advocated for dealing with anger. Reconciliation involves immediate restoration of relations with the object of anger.

#### CONCLUSIONS OF THE BIBLICAL ANTHROPOLOGY OF ANGER

Despite the differences between time and authors of writing, as well as theological intentions, there are several important similarities between the Old and New Testament concerning anger. Some areas treated by each do not significantly overlap in material or interest. Differences occur along lines of the New Testament's focused interest in Jesus and the Christian faith.

Both agree substantially that anger is to be avoided. That quick-temperedness is not to be a quality of a bishop is in accordance with the Old Testament's admonishing against quickness to temper. Likewise, James' urging slowness to anger and readiness to listen reflects the Old Testament tradition. The New Testament texts tend to concretize the Old Testament's wisdom literature associating the hot-tempered and the quick-tempered with the engendering of strife, as the New Testament addresses situations of church trouble involving anger. However the linking of anger with the tradition of the fool does not occur in the New Testament. Only in the non-canonical work, Shepherd of Hermas, is an angry temper said to be foolish.

Both accounts see human anger as having a destructive potentiality. Disruption of human intercourse is seen in the Old Testament wisdom literature, as well as in the New Testament church context passages.



The one narrative concerning Herod and the stories of the parables agree in essence with the Old Testament's depicting of the king's fury as formidable and deadly. The narrative passages have accounts with anger leading to destruction, broken relationships and even murder. Most of the New Testament narratives of wrath involve an intent to murder and in some cases, actual satisfaction of this urge. In the Didache, a non-canonical work, anger is directly connected with murder. The difference between the works appears in the Old Testament's willingness to see a positive aspect to human anger. With few references of constructive quality, the New Testament's view of anger is heavily slanted towards anger as ill. On the other hand, the Old Testament has many scenes of anger as a natural reaction and is considered neutral in some cases and possibly positive in others. Becoming infuriated can lead one to express oneself, to act according to what is important to one, and to attempt correcting social evils.

Both works see anger as being human as an emotion which arises from within. With the vast number of persons, places, and contexts that it is mentioned, anger in both seems to appear pervasively and can be considered as a condition universally shared by people. However, the New Testament's basis for this view differs from that of the Old. Anger is understood from a spiritual perspective as occurring in one who is of the "old nature" which is to be transformed into the "new" by life in Jesus Christ. While both the Old and the New see anger as being a natural part of man, the New attaches a rather perjorative evaluation to that nature. As the nature of the "old nature" is opposed to that of the "new," it must follow that anger is in opposition to the life in the

Spirit. Thus a dualism occurs in the New Testament which find some sympathy in some parts of the Old Testament, such as wise man-foolish man antithesis.

Generally, the spiritual and focused understanding of the New Testament differs from the Old Testament, which leads to other subtle differences in understanding. For example, while both works would agree that anger is a reaction of displeasure to some specific triggering event, the New Testament would understand this anger as stemming from a state of a person's nature. It might not be understood as an excitation or heating of one's spirit, as might be found in the Old Testament. The root from which one's anger arises in the New Testament is a state of human existence removed from a spiritual regeneration. Thus this anger would be a manifestation of one's spiritual state.

Both accounts involve many of the prominent persons becoming angry. The Old Testament is much more generous in this area. The New Testament, however, does have Jesus become angry in one of its few narrative passages involving wrath.

Both seem to view that anger is related to the will. The Old Testament wisdom's admonishing restraint and slowness to anger implies a certain control exercisable by the will through training and knowledge. A similarity in urging to restraint occurs in James. However, the New Testament's advocating repentance implies that one can allow with an act of the will towards Jesus Christ the transformation of his spiritual state.

Both see anger existing upon a corporate level. In both, this corporate emotion is seen always as being destructive. While the New

Testament has wrath occur with mob riots and attempted lynchings, the Old Testament sees rage in the enemy, in wars. There are no passages in either work suggesting a potential for constructiveness of corporate rage.

The ways of dealing with anger differ from the spiritual emphasis of the New Testament. Both works urge restraint and hence, prevention of anger's occurrence. The use of reason as a means of dealing with anger seems to occur more in the Old Testament than the New, which has the objects of rage merely attempt to flee. While the New Testament commands reconciliation, the Old Testament has the notable examples of its happening with Esau and Jacob, Joseph and his brothers. The reconciliation in the New Testament is admonished to be of immediate and of direct nature. Anger is to be quickly dealt with and not allowed to get out of control either in oneself or between others. The New Testament would add that the repentance of a person from his/her "old nature" to the "new nature" in Jesus Christ.

Finally, a word needs to be said concerning the influence of the cultures of the times upon the anthropologies of the Old Testament and of the New Testament writers. Both rely heavily upon the anthropologies of their times: the Old Testament upon that of the Ancient Near East and the New Testament upon that of the Hellenistic culture. Some of the wisdom traditions may have made direct use of Egyptian wisdom traditions while the New Testament suspicion of the passions and the admonishment towards the control of them reflects a Hellenistic world view. Thus some of the presuppositions of the Biblical writers are intimately influenced by the then current cultural presuppositions.

Yet to maintain that the anthropologies are shaped solely by the cultures of the times would be doing a disservice to both the Old and New Testament writers. Though their orientation and fabric of conceptualization is shaped by the thinking of the time, they differ from their culture by making their own contributions. In the Old Testament, the human expression of anger is partially shaped by Israel's own salvation-history. In the New Testament the Christ-centered theological thrust places quite a different color to the use of anger. It would be fair to say that the way the Biblical writers differ from their cultures in terms of anthropologies is their theological thrust of particular nature. On a comparable basis, the New Testament orientation seems more theological than that of the Old Testament.

The conclusions of agreements between the Old and New Testaments concerning an anthropology of anger can be stated as follows:

- (1) Anger seems to be universal, occurring in myriad situations and with all sorts of people.
- (2) Anger is seen as having a potential for destruction.
- (3) Anger is seen as having a potential for construction. Not all anger is bad or destructive. However, the Old Testament does see more of a potentiality for constructiveness of the emotion than does the New Testament.
- (4) Both tend to agree that anger is in reaction to a state of events or affairs. The New Testament, however, tends to understand anger as having its roots primarily in the "old nature."
- (5) The Old Testament's understanding of anger is that of a human emotion appearing in many different forms triggered by events. It is seen in

the narratives as being a natural part of man. The New Testament understands anger to be a manifestation and component of the old nature, a state of existence opposed to the "new nature," a spiritual state. The closest thing in the Old Testament to this antithetical anthropological state is the wise man and the fool.

- (6) Anger on an individual level seems to be viewed as controllable to a certain extent by an act or decision by the human will.
- (7) Corporate anger is seen to exist in such forms as mob action, warfare. It is always viewed in a destructive light.
- (8) Anger is generally to be avoided.
- (9) Restraint, reasoning, reconciliation and repentance are advocated as ways of handling anger. All of these imply a certain amount of human will exercisable over this emotion. The New Testament's view is a person having "life in the Spirit," can transcend destructive anger.

## CHAPTER III

## A POSSIBLE DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE BIBLE AND FREUD

Admittedly, the task of comparing the Bible and Freud carries problems. Besides the inherent difficulties of attempting any comparison (analogies usually proceed upon tenuous logical ground), there are the glaring differences of time, place, person and purpose. The Bible is a composite library of varied forms of literature written over a span of some 1300 years; Freud's works were authored by him alone over a forty year period. However, Freud had the advantage of some 2000 years more of human experience, culture and history. In particular, the Biblical writers did not have as a part of their world the findings of scientific inquiry which began flourishing several centuries before Freud picked up his pen. Their worlds and their cultures were different.

Moreover, Freud cannot be considered independent of the Biblical writers. Part of Freud's "modern" cultural views have been influenced by the insights of Biblical literature. Freud was, after all, Jewish and lived in Western Europe, whose culture has been influenced historically by Judeo-Christian traditions. Freud lived in a world whose sphere was subtly but pervasively shaped by the Biblical writers. The reverse, however, cannot be said because the Biblical writers preceded Freud. Thus any attempts for comparison must be tempered from the beginning by the realization that Freud is not independent of Biblical influence but that the Biblical writers lacked the scientific world of Freud.

The approach for effecting possible dialogue will be that of careful inspection. To aid preliminary inquiry, certain questions will be asked of both: (1) sources of observation from which conclusions concerning anger are derived (2) life situations addressed (3) presuppositions of each and attending problems from those presuppositions. The purpose of these initial questions is to establish a broad base for understanding. Such a probing should then enable a launching into possible dialogue. Throughout the discussion, the assumption will be made of a certain uniformity and continuity of human nature and of human experience. Without this assumption, some of the questions would be without sense.

#### SOURCES OF OBSERVATION AND INTEREST

As a scientist and doctor, Freud investigated persons of interest to him. Generally they are people having pathological characteristics. Freud devoted his attention largely to observing neurotic conditions involving hysteria, obsessional neurosis, melancholia; sadism-masochism and other forms of sexual perversions. The unusual condition of traumatic neurosis was important in his deriving the death instinct. Freud's sources (in the works investigated in this study) might be fairly represented as a "fringe" part of society. By definition this holds because these persons represent a very small portion of the population, owing to the extremity of their condition. Freud's interest here was motivated precisely from their pathological condition. As a scientist, he wanted to understand their nature and cause by unravelling the dynamics behind these unusual cases. This in turn would illumine universal

understandings of humans.

The Biblical writers generally draw upon a broader base of human understanding and experience. The wisdom literature relies upon observations gathered from everyday living. The material comes from at least two cultures-- that of Israel and that of Egypt. Other wisdom literature refers to realities of the court and king. Yet specialized interest areas are also a matter of concern, namely, those areas of church congregations, cult understandings, and historical characters. The focus in the narratives is not upon anyone but rather is directed to the traditions concerning important people in the history of Israel. Usually represented are the cultic or political leaders. The interest stems from understanding that this history is an important one because of the nation's special relationship with Yahweh. The actions of the special and prominent figures of the tradition have had sweeping impact upon all those in the nation throughout generations.

Freud's sources for observation were a select band of human experiences, namely the pathological cases who might appear in any population at any time. His interest was to conclude a scientific understanding that would be applicable to all persons. Likewise, the Biblical writers in a great many passages focus their attention on the restricted group of persons playing a prominent role in the nation's history of relationship to its god, Yahweh. The hearer of such traditions would thus learn something about his own general theological self-understanding. Concerning Freud's set of persons, the Biblical writers would probably consider them as sick persons and possibly as wicked people. Freud might not have considered the study of the Biblical historical tradi-



tions as adequate for scientific inquiry, other than as stories and myths.

#### LIFE SITUATIONS ADDRESSED

Freud's interest brings him in contact with the realm of the pathological. He addressed the existence of abnormalities, whether appearing physically with mysterious origins (hysteria) or involving torment (obsessional neurosis) or low spirits (melancholia), or surfacing as sexual perversions, such as sadism and masochism. Not much is said about these particular pathologies by the Biblical writers. On the other hand, Freud in his works on aggression does not deal with cultic matters.

Both Freud and the Biblical writers speak about the life situation of the anger of a person in a subordinate position. In Freud this life situation emerges in the context of child development when he is speaking of the Oedipal conflict. In the Old Testament, it arises with wisdom literature concerning the king's wrath. In both cases, the persons in the subordinate position is threatened by his superior's rage, the child (in Freud) who fears his father's aggression, and the subject (in the Bible) who might lose his life. Both see the resolution in terms of submission, the child in Freud by identifying with his father and by the concomitant forming of the super-ego and conscience, while the subject in the Bible by refraining from returning anger and by exercising great prudence. In both the anger of the authority is seen as powerful and to be feared by persons in the subordinate role. However, finding an agreeable common ground between the Bible and Freud here en-

counters difficulties. Whereas the Biblical texts speak of a court situation involving adults concerning political and conscious events, Freud's account is a speculative hypothesis concerning the development of a child's personality, transpiring mostly on the unconscious level at age four. This life situation as a common ground is quite suspect.

A more fruitful area for striking a similarity of life situation addressed is that of group aggression and the effect of anger in a group setting. Freud's book, Civilization and Its Discontents, addresses the effect of individual aggression upon societal cohesion, while in the exchange of letters with Einstein, the matter of war is addressed. In similar fashion, several of the Biblical texts address the effect of individual anger upon the matrix of persons about him/her. Some texts mention anger and the social phenomenon of war in the same breath.

Freud considers aggression as being one of the most threatening hazards to civilization, both in individual and collective forms. This view is like that of the Biblical writers. In both the wisdom texts and in the New Testament passages, anger is seen as hazardous for the life of the group, be it the church or society as a whole. Anger can rend relationships asunder and can poison a group's atmosphere with a noxious cloud of hostility. Both see the potential harm of anger for the group and both urge the restraint of its expression in the group setting. However, Freud makes the further contribution of connecting the formation of conscience with the renunciation of aggression, leading to a feeling of "malaise" about one's society. Because persons must renounce their tendencies toward aggression for the sake of their society's cohesion, persons suffer as individuals from their internalized aggression

On initial inquiry the firmest common ground of life situations addressed is that of the effect of anger upon a group of humans.

#### PRESUPPOSITIONS AND PROBLEMS

Freud's presuppositions seem heavily slanted towards the scientific and rational. The Biblical writers make assumptions relating to theological interests. The problems for each stem from each's presuppositions.

For Freud the interest of studying cases of pathology was twofold: medical and scientific. Trained as a neurologist, Freud came into contact with cases of pathology with a doctor's interest in effecting cure. As a scientist, he wished to discover the underlying reasons for the illnesses. Thus heavily presupposed in his work is a medical and scientific model for inquiry. The medical model in effect says: consider this condition as pathological and treat it so as to cure it. The scientific model says: gather your data impartially, fairly, carefully; formulate a theory which can be tested to explain the phenomenon under investigation; experiment or observe further data to confirm or disclaim the attempted explanation. Chiefly, the approach is observation, hypothesis, experimentation, hypothesis, confirmation. An explanation which is the most elegant (simple) and verifiable is probably the most correct. The investigator is to be an observer who attempts to formulate explanations from an objective standpoint. While Freud was an excellent observer, it is true that he was only partially successful in implementing the scientific schema, particularly in the area of formulating theories. His theoretical explanations tend towards a speculative nature

that is inaccessible to testing by controlled experimentation.

Freud's scientific bent carries in its folds a presupposition of reductionism. Succinctly stated, this says: a phenomenon can best be understood by isolating its critical, basic components. This is why a person is seen by Freud from the concept of instincts, which have as their basis the genetic components constituting life. Freud, then, tried to brush away all inessentials to view a phenomenon from its key factors. This reductionistic presupposition allows him to attempt forming universal conclusions: if all persons are constituted by the same factors, then a discovery concerning one represents a discovery for all. Thus an investigation into pathology can turn up characteristics that are held by "normal" persons. A pathology, so viewed from this perspective, becomes only a greater degree of some common factor of all of humanity.

Finally, Freud's research operated under the presupposition that knowledge may lead to cure. By understanding the dynamics of the human in systematized fashion, the researcher achieves an understanding of commonality, of order and of some predictability. From this can come a reasonable attempt for curing the problem.

The Biblical writers have their own set of presuppositions. One is that of a comprehensive, wholistic and instructive orientation. Instead of the pathological cases, the wisdom writers, for example, observe everyday events. This is the source for their knowledge and application. Presupposed by the wisdom literature is a learning situation where the neophyte, child or student is taught useful knowledge to

help the person cope in his/her human intercourse. The thrust of the imparted knowledge from someone of experience is to equip the hearer with the savvy needed to respond aptly to situations and opportunities that arise in the course of a lifetime.

Like Freud, the wisdom writers assume that understanding and knowledge grant one control over one's life to some degree. Both assume that knowledge can make a difference in the behavior of the individual. Their instruction is preventative and preparatory in nature, while Freud's knowledge is curative and systematic in intent.

The wisdom literature presupposes a moral trait involved in actions of persons. An action involves more than the question of suitability, but also of morality. The interest of the writings is not only the teaching of practical wisdom but of true knowledge which is generally seen as being connected with their trust in Yahweh. Presupposed by a morality of this sort is an authority to validate the values. More than reason is relied upon. Yahweh is very much a part of the wisdom literature's understanding of good and evil.

The narrative passages presuppose a certain unique importance to the history which the legends and traditions relate. The nation's important events are to be seen in the actions of its prominent leaders; these leaders and the entire history are to be understood from the nation's relationship with Yahweh. A wholistic and theological perspective that is peculiar to this people emerges. The interest is not with all persons; it is the people of Israel. Human experience is not seen as a piecemeal matter but as a total event to be understood in relationship to the history of a nation and its relationship with its god, Yah-

weh. The interest is synthetic, unitive yet particularistic.

Besides the moral and historical presuppositions contained in the wisdom and narrative sections, respectively, the prophetic literature presupposes certain theological concepts. Yahweh is seen as acting in a moral and historical manner. Part of the activity includes His judging His people when they do not remain faithful to Him and His commandments. The prophet is the man who conveys Yahweh's messages. Often the prophet will use any language or style available to communicate the words.

The particularistic and cultic understanding is carried even further in the New Testament with its adherence to Jesus. The activity and supremacy of God in human affairs, a theological interest, is seen readily when it assumes individual form through a spiritual existence which may be entered only upon personal repentance. Thus mixed with the New Testament are presuppositions of a theological thrust. The churches are seen to be the gathering place and the nurturing ground for this existence.

The problems involved with each follow from their respective presuppositions. Freud's scientific grounding may lead him to turn up merely descriptive conclusions, and thus possibly be inadequate. The Biblical writers might point out that a descriptive result may miss the moral dimension involved in a person's existence. Only a part of man's experience might be captured, the part missing representing a serious flaw to the understanding of humans.

The study of pathologies raises certain problems. The danger is that knowledge will be gained about sickness alone. The jump of gener-

alizing about all of humanity on the basis of pathology may distort the conclusions. One may very well be drawing incorrect inferences. It might be more correct to make conclusions about pathology by inspecting sickness and about health by inspecting healthy persons. Freud's restrictive sample may bias his conclusions.

Like a reductionistic approach has flaws. Assuming one can reduce a person into well-defined components, one still has the problem of understanding the gestalt of their interaction. If a person's experience is to be understood from a perspective of the whole, a reductionistic approach, while gleaning valuable results, might miss the total picture. A person's complexities, his/her formulation of values and his/her own self-understanding may not be done justice to. The Biblical writers, for example, would say that part of comprehending humanity is to be found in one's identity vis-a-vis God. If indeed a person is to be understood from a theological view, then a reductionistic approach as an adequate tool for understanding a person becomes suspect.

By the same fashion, the Biblical writers are limited by their presuppositions. They face the knotty problem of attempting to speak universally from a perspective originally particularistic. An experience with their cultic deity does not validate their statements outside the cult. If statements make sense with the particular world involving Jesus or Yahweh, then what sense do these statements make outside that world? In other words, the question arises as to what applicability there is of a theological approach, particular in origin, for the understanding of humanity in general?

Yet another problem arising is the distortion of the anthropo-

logical by the theological. Simply stated, how much is the usage of human anger in the Biblical texts distorted by a theological, tendentious purpose? How accurate is the portrayal for an anthropology of anger? An example might be found in the parable accounts of the New Testament. The presupposition of God's importance and activity casts some doubts as to the use of anger here. It is quite possible that the anger attributed to the human characters in the story is being distorted for the theological reasons of indicating God's judgment. Some of the general problem is mitigated, however, with considerations of a correlation of anger in the story with the experience of the hearer. To be comprehended, the anger in the context of the story must bear some relation to anger experienced in life by the hearer.

Thus the problems arising from each's presuppositions point to areas of possible distortion. Freud's set of presuppositions make it difficult for him to ask certain questions as to human values and self-understandings, particularly theological. Portions of his system are speculative and theoretical in nature, not all of which is substantiated or accessible for confirmation by experimentation. Problems arise in the Old and New Testaments from the particularistic origin of its interest, as well as a theological thrust and intention behind most of the works.

#### A POSSIBLE DIALOGUE OF ANTHROPOLOGIES OF ANGER

A review of the previous inquiry would turn up the following conclusions:

(A) Freud restricts himself largely to investigating the restricted set



of persons with psychological pathologies for his scientific interest.

While there are portions of the Bible which draw conclusions from everyday living (wisdom), a substantial portion turns its attention to a restricted set of theological interests. In the Old Testament (narrative, prophetic) Yahweh and the leaders of Israel are the interest, while in the New Testament it is Jesus and the churches.

(B) About the only life situation that is addressed by both Freud and the Biblical writers is the problem of anger in a group and societal context.

(C) Freud's presuppositions tend towards scientific, reductionistic, biological, objective and universal assumptions, while the Biblical writers tend towards theological, unitive, synthetic, moral and ethical, particularistic and interpretative leanings.

From initial findings, it might be easy to assume that there is a chasm between Freud and the Biblical writers making comparisons hopelessly few. But a division along the lines of science and religion, modern and ancient does not seem to hold up. There are many reasons. Part of the world from whence Freud formulated his concepts along scientific lines was influenced by the Biblical writers! In a more direct fashion, Freud undoubtedly learned of Judeo-Christian traditions from his culture, his schooling or from his Jewish family. Some of the influence surfaces in later works dealing with aspects of Judeo-Christian traditions.

Though the Near Eastern people did not have our scientific sophistication, they certainly were not totally unfamiliar with some aspects of science. They possessed enough technology to manufacture iron

weapons, for example. About the closest that they came to a scientific approach might be found in the wisdom literature. This literature is the result of close observation which then is expressed in instructional formulations which are constantly checked as to their accuracy and reliability. The process is quite self-consciously performed, thorough, and involves a refining of formulation. Today persons might object to this being termed a science. The use of statistics might be insisted upon, as well as the not allowing of such value-laden labels as fool and wise man. In their world, they were interested in human characteristics and actions and their corresponding results. Because of their interest in value judgments of moral dimensions, they observed human traits and consequences carefully. Theirs was a "value science" of sorts which attempted to establish relationships of cause and result. Though it differs from Freud's method in terms of presuppositions concerning moral values, objectivity and definition of terms, it is like his in its process of careful observation, formulation and further observation.

Yet another reason for softening a position maintaining a sharp demarcation between the systems of Freud and the Biblical writers revolves about the verifiability of Freud's thinking. Highly speculative at points, it is not always of a nature to be confirmed or denied in the laboratory by experimentation. Add to this the fact that it is highly dependent upon the concepts and assumptions of his time and culture (just as the anthropologies of the Old and New Testaments are highly dependent upon their respective times and cultures), and one must conclude that Freud's is another system of mythology, another system of human self-understanding. As far as the conceptualization lacks capability

for confirmation by experimentation, it ceases to be rigorously scientific, and becomes mythological and heuristic.

Both Freud and the Biblical writers speak of a human phenomenon. Assuming humans are much the same in the "modern" world as in the ancient as far as feelings and behavior, how are Freud and the Biblical writers related? What does the human anger of the Biblical texts have to do with Freud's aggression? What is the potential for one interpreting the other?

This study explored the Biblical writers by investigating every passage containing an instance of explicitly labelled human anger. Many of these involve destruction. Dinah's brothers in the book of Genesis revenge her rape with wholesale eradication of the offending family. Esau wishes to kill his brother when angry; Saul wishes to take David's life; Haman plots against Mordecai; the crowds rush forward to mob Jesus and later the disciples; Polycarp is cast to the lions. These appear to be clear-cut examples of aggression. The object is external to the person(s) having it. The intent is destructive. The case of Jonah, devised as the account may be, is still illustrative. Jonah becomes so dissatisfied and angry that he wishes to die. An interpretation along Freudian lines would maintain that the aggression has turned inwards. The story, though fabricated for theological purposes, is yet striking in its reflection of internal aggression and a desire for death!

In the New Testament the anger and wrath mentioned in the passages concerning the church can be termed as aggression. Most of the mentions of these terms occurs in the context of church dissension. Anger and wrath are a part of the division and disruption. Furthermore,

the terms seem to connote an emotion of some general, long-lasting quality with a destructive thrust. Elsewhere in the parables aggression occurs, such as in the parable of the king who becomes angry and has the contumacious subjects exterminated.

In all these cases, the Biblical writers employ terms from their pool of words for anger. They do not use nor do they have words for aggression. It is significant to discover a connection between anger and aggression, however. In many instances, what they describe with the report of an emotion co-incides with Freud's aggression. A dialogue between Freud and the Bible would indicate the close interrelation between the two in many instances!

From the Old Testament inquiry, it was concluded that anger is associated with the fool. The wise man restrains himself by exercising prudence. Though the terms for anger in this collection of passages concerning the fool are mostly of a general and ambiguous nature, the terms used for the "Quick-to Temper, Hot-Tempered" collection are quite standard. They are strong terms,  $\text{אֵפֶסֶת}$  and  $\text{אֵפֶסֶת}$ . In the context of use, these terms could be termed as aggression; they have a destructive, disrupting thrust:

Proverbs 29:22 "A man of wrath stirs up strife  
and a man given to anger causes much transgression."  
(RSV)

Proverbs 15:18 "The man of anger stirs strife,  
the one slow to anger quiets contention." (RSV)

The person with this aggression is linked with the fool:

Proverbs 14:17 "A man of quick temper acts foolishly  
but a man of discretion is patient." (RSV)

Proverbs 14:29 "He who is slow to anger has great understanding,  
but he who has a hasty temper exalts folly." (RSV)

The fool, in turn, is associated with a death-rendering destiny. He is associated with destruction:

Proverbs 5:22 "He dies for lack of discipline,  
and because of his great folly he is lost." (RSV)

Proverbs 17:12 "Let a man meet a she-bear robbed of her cubs,  
rather than a fool in his folly." (RSV)

Proverbs 10:8 "The wise of heart will heed commandments,  
but a prating fool will come to ruin." (RSV)

Proverbs 10:21 "The lips of the righteous feed many,  
but fools die for lack of sense." (RSV)

Proverbs 18:7 "A fool's mouth is his ruin,  
and his lips are a snare to himself." (RSV)

Proverbs 10:14 "Wise men lay up knowledge,  
but the babbling of a fool brings ruin near." (RSV)

Proverbs 19:3 "When a man's folly brings his way to ruin,  
his heart rages against the Lord." (RSV)

Ecclesiastes 10:12 "The words of a wise man's mouth win him favor,  
but the lips of a fool consume him." (RSV)

Ecclesiastes 7:17 "Be not wicked overmuch, neither be a fool;  
why should you die before your time?" (RSV)

In the fool is found a tradition and understanding of anger as aggression being linked with death-tending ends. The relationship of aggression and death is telling here, and lends itself for interpretation by Freud's death instinct. The phenomenon is a type of person whose destiny is such that it is wrapped about death and the person's own destruction. Freud's concepts find embodiment here in this category and tradition.

That the man of anger is linked with this tradition is evidenced even more strongly by statements of his ruin:

Proverbs 22:24-25 "Make no friend with a man given to anger  
nor go with a wrathful man  
Lest you learn his ways  
and entangle yourself in a snare." (RSV)

Proverbs 19:19 "A man of great wrath will pay the penalty;  
for if you deliver him,  
you will only have to do it again." (RSV)

The anger associated with the fool, the quick-tempered, the man of anger is admonished against. It is exactly this type of wrath which receives censure. It is strongly related to a destiny, an existence of death-tending ends. It is an understanding which may receive greater interpretation from Freudian thought.

But to maintain that the fool is a proof of Freud's thoughts, particularly that of a death instinct, would be misdirected. It cannot so function as evidence for the psychologist's speculations. The tradition of the fool is neither precise nor accessible enough. Much of the culture and times of the tradition are buried in the past. Though the Biblical traditions cannot be claimed as a confirmation of Freud's conceptualization, there is a similarity, one capable of interpreting and enriching the other. At this point, the Biblical writers and Freud seem compatible in their anthropology of anger.

Freud's anthropology speaks of instincts. Yet even he would admit that a person may change and mitigate some of the ravages of his death instinct. The wisdom tradition concerning the fool would seem to agree with this educative possibility for humans. For Freud, the super-ego which directs the death instinct against the ego can be tempered. Its ravages can be assuaged by a lessening of demands by the super-ego. This is effected by psychoanalysis by talking with a person trained in

this treatment. Freud also speaks of enhancing bonds between friends, and augmenting commonalities as a means of counteracting aggression. He also suggests education on a long-term basis. All these ideas are means of enhancing the eros instinct in its fight against the death instinct which harbors the aggressive thrust of the person. The eros (life preservative) instincts are strengthened so that man will gradually evolve. The anthropology of the wisdom writers is not much different. Though the wisdom writers do not speak of evolution, they know of the educative possibilities concerning a person. Wisdom is the answer; it is taught by discipline. Life is gotten with the acquisition of wisdom. In form the wisdom writers agree with Freud: the antithesis of fool and wise man represents two ways in life-- death-ending and life-sustaining. The two are in competition, as a person must decide which destiny he/she is to have by seeking instruction of wisdom. Yet like Freud's instincts, there seems to be a certain rootedness concerning the existence of the fool:

Proverbs 26:11 "Like a dog that returns to his vomit  
is a fool that repeats his folly." (RSV)

Proverbs 27:22 "Crush a fool in a mortar with a pestle along with  
crushed grain,  
yet his folly will not depart from him." (RSV)

The anthropologies of anger of Freud and the Old Testament wisdom writers are compatible concerning the connection of aggression and a death-tending direction, the rootedness of this existence, but the possibility of some mitigation through a willingness for education.

In the New Testament is found a similar form of anthropology although there is a marked difference in substance from that of the Old

Testament. As the wisdom traditions, there is an antithesis: the "old nature" and the "new nature." The old nature leads to corruption and eventually to death. The new nature of humans in Christ leads to incorruption and life. Anger, which is interpreted as being aggression, is associated with the "old nature." There is no place for it in the life in the Spirit. Both Freud's life and death instincts would correspond to the anthropological understanding of the "old nature." Both would be subsumed under this category. The new nature is the life of the Spirit. Again aggression is assigned to an existence that is to be avoided.

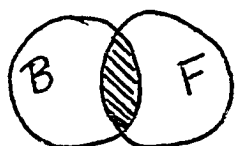
The preceding look has revealed that a good portion of explicit references to anger can be interpreted by aggression. But there are other instances which cannot. In the narrative collection of the Old Testament, there are numerous passages of anger occurring in a harmless fashion. Within the context of the story, the anger seems neutral (not disapproved) and even justified! In the New Testament there is the striking example of Jesus becoming angry and then displaying no aggressive act. Instead of destroying, he heals! Some examples of anger, such as Jacob's anger with Rachel after being demanded to do what heretofore was impossible is an outburst of frustration and nothing more. He harms no one. The anger of Jacob (with Laban), Moses, Nehemiah and some others seems quite appropriate according to the context of the story and even justified. In Nehemiah's case, the anger is expressed through determination to organize the people to correct an injustice. Thus not all anger in the Bible represents Freud's aggression. Nor is all anger condemned or viewed as bad.

Not even all aggression is necessarily seen as bad in the Bible.



The king's anger in the wisdom literature is an example. This can be properly labelled as aggression, for it represents a powerful attacking thrust that can be most destructive. Yet because it is the king, this aggression is not condemned in itself. He is powerful and has a unique role as ruler. Often, too, he is seen as representing the divine.

What this all means for the Biblical understanding of human anger is that not all of anger is seen as aggression; not all anger is condemned; indeed, not all aggression is censured. When anger is admonished against, it is individual anger containing aggression. This is inveighed against in the wisdom literature. The narrative literature which has a descriptive mention of anger portrays aggression but makes no comment itself concerning anger. There is a wide range of presentations and valuations of anger. Thus the Biblical understanding of anger would not coincide exactly with Freud's aggression. If the relationship of the two were represented by use of set diagrams, this might be the result:



(drawn representationally,  
not proportionally.)

where B= Biblical anger  
F= Freudian aggression.

Where the two sets intersect (overlap), Biblical anger could be labelled as Freudian aggression. An example would be the anger of the fool. An example of the part of B that does not overlap with F would be the neutral or even constructive anger depicted in the narrative portions of the Bible. Aggression not linked with anger (the portion of F which does not overlap with B) might be that of the sadist (in Freud) or of

wars against the inhabitants of the land (in the book of Judges, for example).

Such a representation of the relation between Biblical anger and Freudian aggression suggests the interpretation the former may lend to the latter. The Biblical understanding would intimate that the range of angry expression covers a greater span than that indicated by Freudian aggression. On the level of expression, anger appears alongside other human emotions-- grief, joy, happiness, fear-- and is a part of a person's everyday experience. Freud's aggression is to be seen as one of the overarching components in a person's existence. The significance and scope of this aggression is put into perspective by the full range of Biblical anger. Freud's aggression is always in the background of a person's everyday existence, struggling with the drive to live. Though a person may have individual shows of anger or of even aggression, he/she exists in the over-arching framework described by Freud. A person's aggression is thus come to be seen in a profound manner. It tends to be abstract and removed from ordinary, everyday expressions. When it does appear, it does so in the conscience, and in destructive acts. Otherwise, it is always a pervasive, ever-present factor in a human's existence.

The New Testament takes a perspective radically different from that of Freud or the Old Testament. Anger in the New Testament is attributed to the "old nature" which represents the eros and death instincts of Freud's system, because the old nature represents life under the law and all its necessities and strivings and drives. The new nature represents the new existence in Christ which is free from the ulti-

mate domination by a death or life instinct. The person is no longer captured by or tossed about by these drives. He/she enters a new existence upon acceptance of Christ that enables him/her to be free from one's own anger. The self-understanding of the person under the anthropology of the "new nature" is markedly altered.

When Paul proclaims this new existence, it is not to the world in general. He writes specifically to the Christian congregations who are supposedly "in Christ." When he advocates the eschewing of anger, it is not to humanity at large but specifically to the Christians. It is their particular self-understanding which makes his instructions and comments possible. Paul is not preaching total renunciation of all anger or aggression (which may make fertile ground for neurosis), but is proclaiming the implications of the new life in the Spirit. The givenness which is meant by the "old nature" and by Freud's instincts can be transcended. Paul might maintain that this view is post-Freudian. It proposes a solution to the dilemma of human existence depicted by Freud's struggle of the eros against the death instinct both individually and socially. The solution, Paul would maintain, is found in the reality of the life in the Spirit, brought about by Christ.

A pause for careful reflection is called for at this point. Freud's notion of instincts is a biological one related to a human genes. The New Testament's concept is theological. How are the two related? Is the New Testament answer really an answer at all? How does a theological answer have anything to do with a biological and natural situation? While it is true that the theological response is a mental concept, so is Freud's notion of instincts. Both exhibit the mental

imagination of any hypothetical construct. Freud's instincts would be difficult to confirm scientifically. Freud himself, in his own careful self-examining manner, says in his 32nd lecture of his "New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis (1932), entitled "Anxiety and Instinctual Life":

The theory of the instincts is so to say our mythology. Instincts are mythical entities, magnificent in their indefiniteness. In our work we cannot for a moment disregard them, yet we are never sure that we are seeing them clearly. You know how popular thinking deals with the instincts. People assume as many and as various instincts as they happen to need at the moment-- a self-assertive instinct, an imitative instinct, an instinct of play, a gregarious instinct and many others like them. People take them up, as it were, make each of them do its particular job, and then drop them again. We have always been moved by a suspicion that behind all these little ad hoc instincts there lay concealed there lay concealed something serious and powerful which we should like to approach cautiously.<sup>1</sup>

Freud's concept of instincts is indefinite, tentative, speculative. Its purpose is to adumbrate a factor shaping one's reality and destiny. This factor(s) has the quality of exercising a profound influence through a seeming rooted presence throughout one's existence. While some might attempt to reduce the complexities shaping one's destiny into interaction with the environment, Freud chooses the concept, somewhat hidden, of instincts. Likewise, the Biblical writers grapple with the multitude of factors influencing a person's course. They use concepts such as fool-wise man, old nature- new nature, Yahweh, Christ.

Though expressed in biological language, Freud's notion of instincts is theological in function. The reality described is so com-

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<sup>1</sup>Sigmund Freud, "New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis," in his Standard Edition, (London: Hogarth Press, 1968), XXII, 95.

plex, intricate and mysterious that the best one can do is to hint or speculate at it. So far one cannot quantitize such a reality; one can only construct a mythology, such as Freud and the Biblical writers do. On the other hand, the New Testament makes statements psychological and biological in importance, for it points to a different human self-understanding. It is a transcendent view of reality which maintains that a human can be free from his/her anger, alienation, aggression. The psychological and biological impact comes if the assumption that one's self-understanding influences one's perception and behavior is granted. A theological view, then, may point the way to a reality inaccessible by scientific inquiry.

With its theological thrust, the New Testament lends interpretation to Freud. It points to a solution of the dilemma presented by him of aggression in the interests of the eros being directed against the person and thus jeopardizing the eros, the predicament of the need to survive and the need to destroy and die. The New Testament puts the Freudian conceptualization in perspective by its proposal of a reality in which persons can reach past their aggression. They can be free of it and can be beyond it. The reality, however, is expressed in the particularistic reality of Christ.

The conclusions from a dialogue between Freud and the Biblical writers on the subject of an anthropology of anger can be summarized as follows:

- (1) Freud and the Biblical writers agree as to anger's prevalence, humanness, and potentiality for destruction.
- (2) The aggression written about by Freud describes many acts of anger

which occur in the Old and New Testaments. Human anger in the Bible includes more than the aggression described by Freud. The relationship of Freudian aggression and Biblical anger is that of intersecting but non-coincidental sets.

- (3) The Biblical writers would agree with Freud concerning the naturalness and givenness of aggression. Freud's form of the dualing instincts of eros and death is paralleled and finds expression in the Old Testament's antithesis of the fool- wise man. The fool's end is destruction; that of the wise man is life.
- (4) Not all anger is viewed as bad by the Biblical writers. Nor is all aggression seen as wrong by them. In the narrative texts of both Old and New Testaments, anger appears in a context of neutrality or even justification. The aggression of the king is not condemned. The anger that does seem to be condemned is the individual anger that can be characterized as aggression of persons who are not the king. This explicit admonition appears in the wisdom literature concerning the fool.
- (5) Both Freud and the Biblical writers see aggression as being harmful for the internal life of the group, as it causes destruction and division. Its effect is to threaten a group's cohesiveness. Both agree that such aggression is to be avoided through self-restraint. Only Freud sees the side-effects of this renunciation, as the individual suffers from a "malaise" from suppressing his/her tendency for aggression.
- (6) Both agree that a person's will can have some influence over one's anger (aggression).

- (7) The New Testament proposes a post-Freudian solution to the description of aggression versus survival. It is found specifically in the reality pointed to by life in Christ. Living in the Spirit allows one to be free from one's aggression.

## CONCLUSIONS

From the dialogue come conclusions concerning an anthropology of anger and the implications for the church's attitude towards anger. These now will be stated. A discussion will then ensue concerning their possible implications.

Conclusion #1-- Anger seems to be a human emotion that is universally shared. Both Freud and the Biblical writers think so. When Freud was speaking of aggression, he was talking about all people. The wisdom writers of the Old Testament drew upon other cultures for some of their material; the wisdom saying themselves are directed to any hearer. The "old nature" referred to in the New Testament applies to all persons. Both the Old and New Testament writers drew upon the anthropologies from the culture of the times.

The implication of this universality is the naturalness of anger. It is probably a fact of life. From this perspective, a stance which attempts to deny anger's existence is unwise. A theology which does not acknowledge this part of humanity is doomed to a shallow or inadequate viewpoint. Churches which try to handle anger by denying it or by pretending it doesn't exist are doing their members a disservice. Anger is a part of life and is to be accepted as such. Persons who feel themselves to be angry need not be ashamed of having such feelings.

Conclusion #2-- Anger is interrelated but not necessarily the same as aggression. The relation of the two seems to be that of intersecting but non-co-incidental sets. In several of the Biblical texts, the explicit mention of the emotion anger precedes what can be termed